



***The Differing Perspectives of Success:  
What does it really mean to be successful?***

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Grades 3-5, Social Emotional Learning

**Keywords:** definition of success, failure, positive psychology, mental health, centralizing happiness

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit. (Insert a hyperlink to Appendix 1 where you've stated your unit's main standards.)

**Synopsis:** This unit focuses on three core goals: centralizing happiness, embracing failure, and broadening the definition of success. Students will work to examine their current understanding of success and how they will use this understanding to obtain their goals in life. At the beginning of the unit, students will evaluate their understanding of success and create a vision board expressing how they will acquire success in their life. As students work through this unit, the hope is that they will reexamine their current view of success and determine that being successful is self-defined. Students will explore failure and the opportunities that failing at something can create for success. Throughout the unit, they will see examples of famous people who were turned down numerous times before become a huge success in their field. Using various strategies based on Positive Psychology, students will understand the importance of resiliency, perseverance, and self-love. As a culmination of this unit, students will complete their Vision Boards to show how their definition of success may have altered based on what they have learned throughout the unit.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 30 students in 4<sup>th</sup> grade during Social Emotional Learning time.*

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## **The Differing Perspectives of Success: What Does It Really Mean to Be Successful?**

*Katelyn Gardepe*

### **Introduction**

This unit will focus on the perception of success and how it pertains to our well-being. Because many of my students are high-performing, their perception of success is often based on the idea that the harder they work, the more they will achieve. These mindsets are built by their experiences with success in their own family life, as many of these students come from affluent, suburban homes. Children and grandchildren of doctors, lawyers, engineers, and business owners, these students often experience the road to success as a forfeit of well-being for the reward of growth and financial freedom.

On the other hand, we also have students who come from the opposite end of the socio economic spectrum. These students are often deterred by failure, see it more often than others, and begin to assume that success is not in arm's reach. Throughout this unit, students from all socioeconomic backgrounds will learn that failure is what makes us what we become and that learning from our failure may be one of the most powerful tools we have.

Throughout my years as a classroom teacher, I have seen many students fall into this trap. In recent years, there has been a big push for social emotional learning time and applying the Growth Mindset in the classroom. These strategies allow students to become mindful of their attitudes and how it affects themselves and others. However, sometimes just the framework of our education system can cause this pressure for our students.

On one hand, we have students who have been “passed along” by the systems strict policy against retention. For example, I once had a third grader, Donny, who I can remember vividly. He was sent to my classroom to complete a state assessment that he missed on its initial testing day. When the test began, he raised his hand and told me that he couldn't read any of the passage on the test. I had no option but to tell him to do his best—while 53 questions of the same reading level sat in front of him. This poor child had to muddle through a test that just told him again and again that he was not where his grade level peers were, not even close. After this day, I had additional interactions with this child and his teacher and found out that he was very defiant in the classroom. He would rip things up all day and refused to talk to anyone.

My heart melted for Donny. Could you imagine being in a job where everyone knew what they were doing except for you? Regardless of how far behind you got on your workload, the rest of the company kept speeding ahead and you were left behind. The intention of objecting to retention often seems to be that a child's mental health will suffer because of the social emotional damage it could do. I'd like to ask these stakeholders, what do you think is happening to this child's social emotional health? He is already acting out and defying rules in his third

grade classroom. He does not believe in himself and as days go on, we basically continue to tell him he is a failure.

Truth is, a child like this will never catch up in a grade-level classroom, no matter how much pressure you want to put on the teacher to do so. A few weeks ago, we began an intervention group with Donny for reading and math. As he began to realize that he could be successful with things that his peers in this group were doing, he flourished. He has realized that he isn't a failure and that he CAN do the work that is being given to him. Donny, like many other students, needed to feel like he was successful in order to thrive.

On the other hand, we have students who are pushing themselves to be the best of the best, retesting just to get that one question they missed the first time around, correct. Constantly looking to get the highest MAP score or that 5 on their End-of-Grade test. In the classroom, these students do everything they can to make sure they are the top of the class- often from pressures to succeed at home or competitions with siblings or classmates. When they experience failure, they become truly hard on themselves exacerbating the pressure and creating additional anxiety.

I have taught in many capacities: grade level classroom teacher, small group pull-out teacher, high socio-economic schools, low socio-economic school, and so on. One thing that has always rung true, regardless of my placement, is that our children WANT to do well. In some cases, we see students that want so badly to do well because they feel it is the only way to make their parents proud. In other cases, we see students who want so badly to do well, but are often told that their dreams are out of reach.

The pressure of being successful can wear on all students and it is often overlooked as an issue. Anxiety, depression, and general unhappiness are becoming an alarming new trend in young children, especially as they begin to enter middle school. In a study of affluent youth by Suniya S. Luthar and Bronwyn E. Becker, the two explore the consistent studies of our economically disadvantaged youth and their success, but point out the oversight of the other end of the spectrum- our affluent, suburban youth. Within the study, multiple findings suggest that while overlooked, the increased pressure placed on these children often leads to higher levels of anxiety symptoms and drug use.

## **Rationale**

Throughout this unit, I'd like to address these issues with students, as we explore the varying perspectives of success. Does our income determine our success? What sacrifices are we willing to make to be successful? Do we need to work long hours in order to be successful? How important is success if it means less time with family or doing things we love? As students explore these questions, we will take a look at the varying opinions of success from around the world. Students will take time to compare the American work ethic to that of Finland, Japan, Germany and Europe. From there, students will work to determine if the difference in beliefs has negatively affected the amount of success people in these countries achieve. For example, even though some workers in Germany have gone down to a 29-hour work week, as compared to the 40-hour minimum work week in the USA, they are considered to be the most productive in their field throughout the world!

In elementary school, we work to focus on student's social emotional health during their SEL time each morning. This is a 25-minute window of time where we aim to help students improve their emotional well-being and build upon the whole-child approach. This lesson will be intended to be taught during this timeframe, though it can easily be implemented into the ELA block as it will include the following standards:

RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.4.2 Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SL.4.3 Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points

At the beginning of this unit, students will be asked to determine the meaning of success. Using prompting questions, students will think about how they define success, what it takes to be successful, what they may have to give up to be successful, and the steps they will need to follow to get "there". Using a variety of resources from the web, students will look into the differences in work/life balance between various countries. Following this, students will explore multiple successful individuals and determine how their "road to success" may differ from their own personal view of how to succeed.

At the end of this unit, it is my hope that students can develop a new definition of success from where they may have possibly started. Using the information from this unit, students should be able to see that the typical American work mantra, "The more I work, the more successful I will be" needs to be understood loosely. Students need to ensure they have time to do things that make them happy along with their hard work, and the balance between the two is really what contributes to their happiness, fulfillment, and overall success in life.

## **Demographics**

My school is located in an affluent, suburban neighborhood in South Charlotte. The population of the school is made up of approximately 74% White, 10% Hispanic, 9% Black, and 4% Asian. About 13% of the students are Selwyn are receiving free and reduced lunch services. We are blessed to have a large amount of support from families within our school community.

Selwyn is fortunate enough to be part of the Southpark Campus, which includes an elementary school, middle school, and high school. The property of the campus stretches across 120 acres of wooded, hilly terrain. Our campus is intersected by two creeks and nature trails which are occasionally utilized for science lessons within the schools.

With the current state of the world, it is safe to say that I actually don't have any idea as to what students I will teach next year. Specifically, I know that the fourth grade classrooms are typically made up of 25-30 students. Typically, our grade level would departmentalize to better prepare students for middle school, however with Covid-19 and its variants still in play, it is probably safe to assume we will keep our own classes.

As a school, our student demographic is extremely bright. About 50% of the students in our school are considered Gifted and Talented, receiving additional Talent and Development services as a certified TD student or considered TD Catalyst (gifted but did not achieve certification). With this said, I do know that many of my students will fit into this category.

## **Content Research**

How Does Success Impact Mental Health (or vice versa)?

What is success? Merriam-Webster defines success as (1) the fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame, (2) the correct or desired result of an attempt, (3) someone or something that is successful: a person or things that succeeds. In America, success is often deemed the ability to work hard and obtain wealth; to have all of the things you could have ever possibly dreamed of because you have put great effort into succeeding. Often, success has a relationship with achievement through our jobs or schooling, rather than that of well-being and happiness. To many, a successful person is one who works often, climbs the "ladder", and is able to provide his/her family with financial stability. But are you truly successful simply because you are able to make a lot of money?

Society has long created the impression that success in America means that you have given up much of what you enjoy, to work long hours and ensure financial stability for your family. This specific ideal glorifies the hustle of working hard, disregarding one's personal well-being. Many see this as an inevitable part of success, that you have to sacrifice your health and mental well-being in order to be "successful". Even young students interpret this mantra. In some ways, maybe this is true. We feel more secure when we are able to have financial freedom, and it is no secret the amount of stress it lifts off an individual. However, what if this financial freedom comes at a cost? What if it means that we have given up time with our loved ones, or catching our son's football game, or a movie night with friends? Are we truly successful if we have to give up so much to gain this idea of success?

The work-life balance is certainly something that Americans seem to lack. Increasing suicide rates and declining mental health has pushed many to advocate for shorter work weeks. In Germany, metal workers recently won the right to a 28-hour week, 12 hours less a month than American workers. One may argue that the work cannot be done in a shorter time frame, however, in many cases, this has been proven to be untrue. For example, workers in Luxembourg are considered to be the most productive in the world even though they only have a 29-hour work week. The data clearly states that though Americans work much longer hours, the overwork does not correlate to increased productivity. (American work ethic glorifies the hustle, disregards personal well-being 2019)

In a report by Business Insider, it states that Americans tend to work longer, take fewer vacations, and socialize less on the job than those in other countries. Many people from other countries look down upon the American work ethic, shunning it as being inefficient. A Gallup report from 2014 estimated that the average American worker spent 47 hours a week working, one of the highest figures in the world! In addition, the average American worker is offered around 2 weeks of paid leave a year (compared to countries like Sweden where workers get 5 weeks), but most do not even take advantage of this little time they are granted. According to Glassdoor, a careers website, the average American employee only takes 54% of this allotted time. Expecting parents are not guaranteed any time off in America, but countries like Finland offer 7 weeks of leave before having the child and an additional 16 weeks after the birth. Men are granted 8 weeks of paid leave to be with their family during this time. Americans often eat lunch at their desks or while still working, finding it impossible to complete their tasks for the day without giving up this time. Other countries, like France, Spain, and Greece encourage workers to take a lunch that last an hour or more, and rarely take place while they are still working. In Sweden, workers often enjoy a daily breather called “fika”. This is an extended coffee break for employees to gather and socialize with each other. “Fika” is offered to employees in addition to their regular lunch break, and for many employees, is offered twice a day. Nearly two thirds of workers and 57% of executives think that productivity is boosted when coworkers are friends with each other (Abadi 2018).

This continuous model of overworking has become second nature to most Americans, and has trickled down to our children. The feeling of stopping work has become a feeling of becoming behind in work, thus causing us to lose out on many other things that make us happy. Historical data over the last three decades indicates that Americans are twice as rich now, but no happier than they used to be. The data is fleeting, and American’s overworked version of success seems to be misleading to not only adults, but our younger generations as well.

### How Does the American Perception of Success Affect our Children?

As a teacher in America, I am seeing more and more cases of anxiety in children. It is said that one in ten children suffer from anxiety disorder. Many children report feeling a similar amount of stress as adults. On a scale of 1 to 10, teens report stress levels as an average of 5.8 during the school year with a healthy score being considered a 3.9. In the summertime, these teens reported their levels as a 4.6, still above what is considered a healthy score.

Often times, our children are feeling overwhelmed by the pressure they feel from their own perception of success. Research is often conducted around our economically disadvantaged and minority youth, but lacking when we discuss our affluent, suburban families. While financial stability did not seem to be an issue for these families, divorce rates had doubled, teen suicide had tripled, and depression rates were through the roof. (Becker 2002)

In a study comparing upper socioeconomic suburban youth with their economically disadvantaged counterpart, it was found that suburban youth had significantly higher levels of

anxiety symptoms and substance abuse. One of the suspected causes of distress for these teens was the excessive achievement pressures put on them. In many suburban areas, there is an expectation of gaining acceptance (and even scholarship) into the most prestigious colleges. Parental pressures are causing children to believe that their parents value them more for what they can do than for what/who they are. This gives students the idea that their accomplishments are the only indicator of their self-worth, causing distress when they feel they have made a mistake or failed. (Becker 2002)

### Which Comes First, Success or Happiness?

Success or happiness, which comes first? Similar to the chicken and the egg, this lingering question has been long debated. For a long time, psychology focused on the issues involved with mental illness and less on the positive aspects of human behavior that help us to combat mental issues which cause feelings of stress or failure. Positive Psychology would venture to say that happiness brings about success, not the other way around. (Haidt 2005)

“Positive Psychology is the study of conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing and optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions.” While many feel it is a reaction to most general psychology that currently exists, it grew largely because of the imbalance of clinical psychology. The focus on mental illness rather than mental well-being has put a spotlight on the missing components of human behavior we study less often. Positive Psychology does not dismiss the existence of human suffering, dysfunctional families, and real-life hardships that people experience every day. Rather, the aim of positive psychology is to focus on what makes us happy, fulfilled, and emotionally strong. (Haidt 2005)

Shawn Achor, the author of “The Happiness Advantage”, conducted an experiment where he provided three hours of positive psychology training to a group of people. After this experiment, he went back to see how the training had affected these individuals. What he found was that this group had showed significantly higher life satisfaction scores and lessor stress scores than those who did not take the training. Shawn’s theory focuses on the 7 Principles of Happiness:

1. The Happiness Advantage: How happiness gives your brain and organization a competitive edge.
2. The Fulcrum and the Level: Changing your performance by changing your mindset.
3. The Tetris Effect: Training your brain to capitalize on possibility.
4. Failing Up: Capitalizing on the downs to build upward momentum.
5. The “Zorro” Circle: How limiting your focus to small, manageable goals can expand your sphere of power.
6. The 20-second Rule: How to turn bad habits into good ones by minimizing barriers to change.
7. Social Investment: Why social support is your single greatest asset, or not to retreat into yourself.

The definition of success is a varied opinion. One person’s idea of success can be very different from another’s. Because of this, it is important to allow ourselves and our children to create their

own versions of success. In the dictionary, success is specifically defined as “The fact of getting or achieving wealth, respect, or fame.” However, many would disagree with this narrow definition. For example, Barbara Bush would define success as how you treat others, from family to strangers. Albert Schweitzer defined success as loving what you do. Zappos CEO, Tony Hsieh, says success is all about living in accordance with your values. Author Maya Angelou believed success was about enjoying your work. (Riopel 2021)

This list could go on. The many differing definitions are set specifically by the individual and the goals they set for themselves. Author Stephen Covey suggested that success should be defined by what you might want to be remembered for at your funeral. Perhaps this is an excellent way to think about what you want to accomplish, how you treat people, and what your legacy will be or in other words, your very own definition of success. (Riopel 2021)

## **Instructional Implementation**

### **Teaching Strategies**

*Cooperative Learning:* Cooperative Learning is a time when students work together to solve problems, share ideas, and/or complete a task. Students will work together to determine the characteristics of a successful person. Through verbally communicating with each other and responding to others, students will gain a better understanding of how others view success and how their definition can vary.

*Note-taking:* Notetaking is a great strategy for students to collect ideas, data, and their own understanding as we work through lessons. Students will take notes as they look at various people and their “roads to success”. They will work together to create a note-catcher that allows them to share the similarities and differences of their perspective to others perspective. Students will use their notes to help them develop a final project at the end of this unit.

*Graphic Organizer:* Graphic Organizers are great tools for students to gather their ideas and make sense of their thoughts. Students will use graphic organizers to help organize characteristics of a successful vs. unsuccessful person.

*Instructional Conversation:* Instructional Conversation is quite common in the classroom. Students will learn about how other countries/people view success and then work to expand on these ideas with their classmates. Students will spend time working together to come up with “big” ideas about success.

*Partnered Instruction:* Learning from a peer is so valuable. Throughout this unit, students will work together to create their perceptions of success as it evolves.

*Gallery Walks:* Students will work in groups often throughout this unit. As they continue to create products based on their tasks, their work will be hung around the room. Students will conduct a “gallery walk” of each groups work and take time to agree/disagree with their peer’s thoughts. Gallery Walks allow for students to see the work from others perspectives and to reexamine their own ideas within a class discussion.



## Student Activities

### Day One: Pre-Assessment/Vision Board

**Materials Needed:** large poster board, magazines, newspapers, markers, paper

To prepare for this week's lessons, students will begin by thinking about their definition of success. Students will fold a blank poster board in half. On one half, students will use magazines, drawings, words, etc. to show how they view success. They can think about what they want to be when they get older, how they think they will get there, and anything else they hope to accomplish to consider themselves "successful".

Give students time to share their vision boards (if they feel comfortable).

### Day Two: Examining Different Architypes of Success (30 minutes)

**Materials:** a set of "Person Cards" and anchor chart paper for each group, sticky notes

Today, students will continue to mold their definition of success. Break students into groups of 4-5 students. Give each group a set of "Person Cards" and a blank piece of anchor chart paper. On the board, show students how to make a success scale. Students should draw a straight line, labeling one side of the line as "least successful" and the other side of the line "most successful". Discuss with students their task for this lesson. Students should work to read the "Person Cards" with their group members and decide (as a group) where to put that card on their Success Scale. Let students know that if they are unsure of where they would like to place a "Person Card", they can stack them in the middle of their scale for the moment.

This activity will take a bit of time. Students should spend time discussing why a person might be placed more towards the least successful side of the scale versus the most successful (and vice versa). Encourage this conversation as it will allow students to rethink their current definition of success through collaboration with their group members.

Once groups are finished, have them hang up their scales around the room. Give groups some time to complete a gallery walk of the other success scales hanging up. Students can use post-it notes to disagree with the placement of a specific "Person Card" and stick it to the groups success scale. All post-it notes must have an explanation for disagreements.

### Day Three: Examining our Success Scales (30 minutes)

**Materials:** Success scales from yesterday's lesson, *Successful vs. Unsuccessful* worksheet, *Successful vs. Unsuccessful* Anchor Chart, *What Makes a Person Successful?* Anchor Chart, and post-it notes

Give students an opportunity to meet back with their group and review the post-it notes that have been attached to their scales (about 10 minutes).

Bring the students back together to create a classroom success scale based on their work from yesterday. Hand out the *Successful vs. Unsuccessful worksheet* to students (they will record class responses throughout the lesson).

Have students share their thoughts as you hold up each “Person Card” one by one. On the success scale at the board, work with students to come up with an agreed upon position on the scale, hearing arguments from student groups about the correct placement. Openly discuss student reasoning for a person being more or less successful. Record these responses on a piece of chart paper, labeled *Successful vs. Unsuccessful* and direct students to do the same on their individual worksheets.

Exit Ticket: On a post-it, have students respond to the following question: *What makes a person successful?* Students will post their post-it notes on the *What Makes a Person Successful?* Anchor Chart (created before class) for classmates to review. (Students can do this anonymously.)

**Day Four:** Failure- A Stepping Stone to Success

**Materials:** Technology to show a video, *The Learning Pit* anchor chart/slide to display

Today, students will work on thinking about times when they have felt unsuccessful. To open the lesson, have students respond to the following prompt:

*Think about a time when you have failed at something. Maybe you tried to do a trick on your bike and it didn't work, maybe you studied hard to get an A and you didn't, or maybe you really wanted to make a certain team and didn't make it. Whatever this time was, did it make you feel unsuccessful or discouraged? How did you overcome this?*

Allow students time to share, if they would like to.

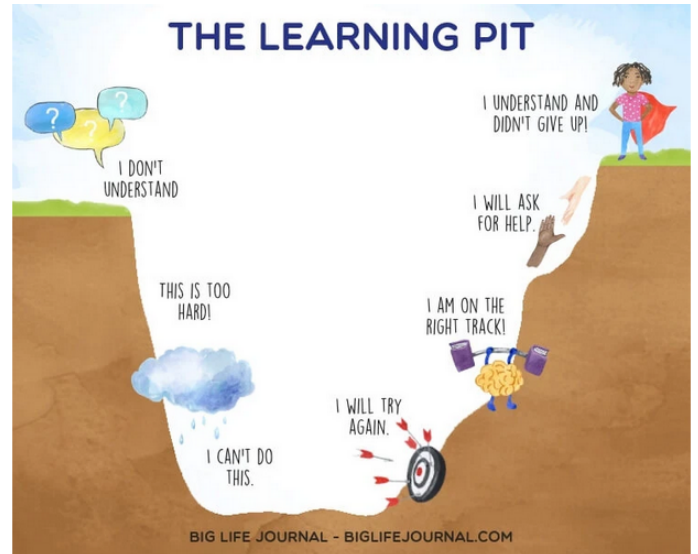
Explain to students that often times we feel unsuccessful when we fail at doing something we have set a goal towards. Ask, “*Do you think it's possible that failure could help us succeed, if so, how?*” Have students talk at their tables to decide whether the answer to this is yes or no. Have groups share out with the class.

Show students the following video from YouTube.com, [\*10 Famous Failures Who Never Gave Up and Succeeded in Life.\*](#)

Following the video, ask students to share their takeaways from the video. Discuss as a class.

Show student *The Learning Pit* Anchor Chart. Refer back to the video to remind students that sometimes our failures are really the stepping stone to achieving our goals. The key is not giving up!

Exit Ticket: Think back to the writing prompt from the beginning of class and remember the time that you felt like you failed. How could you use that failure as a stepping stone to achieve your goals?



### Day Five: Happiness Advantage

**Materials:** “Person Cards”, anchor chart paper, markers, sticky notes, *Comparing Success and Happiness* worksheet

Ask students, “How does our own happiness play a role in being successful?”. Allow students time to think about the question and write their response on a sticky note. As students complete their response, post the responses on the board. Read the sticky notes aloud to the class.

Tell students that researchers actually believe that being happy makes a person more successful. For a long time, people believed the only way to be successful was to meet goals and make a lot of money. Now, research shows that it’s actually the other way around. If you work hard, but also ensure that you are able to do things that make yourself happy, you will become more successful.

Today, students will use the same “person cards” they used in Lesson 2, to determine where each person would land on a “Happiness Scale”. Tell students that this time, rather than thinking about how successful we think the person is, let’s also think about their happiness. Students will create a similar scale on chart paper, as they did for their Success Scale. Students should work with groups to place the “person cards” on the scale from least happy to happiest. Students will engage in this task with their group members and discuss their reasoning for different placements.

After students have completed the task, have them hang their Happiness Scale underneath their groups Success Scale from early in the unit. Have students examine the similarities and differences in the two scales using the *Comparing Success and Happiness* worksheet.

Close out today’s lesson with a discussion of the similarities and differences between the two scales. Have students think about whether a person can truly be successful if they are unhappy?

### Day Six: Post-Assessment/Complete Vision Board

**Materials:** “Success Is Self-Defined” excerpt, students Vision Boards from the beginning of the unit, magazines, newspapers, markers, paper

Display the excerpt, “Success Is Self-Defined”, as students begin class. Have them read the excerpt and reflect independently as other students complete their reading.

### **Success Is Self-Defined**

**By: Andres Mosses Buensuceso**

*“Success is not something that is defined in a certain way and something that could be drawn. Success is pretty much something that you, and only you, define for yourself. Success is something money cannot buy and something that varies from one individual to another. For example, some people define success as taking good care of their families and spending enough time with them, something money can never buy.*

*A common misconception we have in life is that money is equal to success, especially in today’s materialistic world. Money does not always equal success but unfortunately we tend to measure our self-worth when we look at our income sheet. If we look at an individual with a sports car, we say he is more successful than us; however true success is defined by the person themselves as they go through life, exert the effort and remain happy and healthy in every step.” (Buensuceso n.d.)*

Once all students are present and have read the excerpt on their own, read the excerpt aloud to students. Stop for reflection throughout the excerpt and have a group discussion about what it means. Leave the excerpt on the board for the remainder of the lesson.

Today, students will complete the other half of their vision board. This will reflect any takeaways they have from the unit this week, as they continue to self-define their own definition of success and how they will meet their goals.

Allow students time to share at the end of class, encouraging them to explain how their definition of success might have changed from the beginning of this unit to the end.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Standards Addressed within this Unit**

RL.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL.4.2 Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

SL.4.3 Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points

## Appendix 2

### “Person Cards”

#### **Gil & Virginia**

Gil and Virginia both work in retail. They live in a two-bedroom apartment in a quiet suburban neighborhood. Gil grew up in the same neighborhood and has lots of family and friends nearby. Next month, they will welcome their first baby into their family. Virginia is not given paid time off work when the baby comes, so Gil will work extra hours at the store to help pay the bills.

#### **Jace**

Jace is a 16-year-old boy who began acting when he was just 5 years old. He has had many “gigs” since then and in the last three years has starred in his own TV show on the Disney Channel. Jace has been acting for so long, that he misses just being a kid. He completes his schoolwork online and never gets to see his friends. Recently, his high school had their homecoming Dance. All of his friends were hoping to see him, but he was unable to make it. In a few months, will be his high school prom. Jace asked his mom to go, but they have already booked an acting gig. This new gig will make Jace a lot of money and help him to pick up more roles for next year.

## **Jose**

Jose is a 45-year-old man who works for a large corporation in the city. He lives by himself, but has a large 3-bedroom loft in Uptown with amazing views! Jose works long hours and often gets home after 8pm. This year, he received a bonus for his efforts at work worth \$100,000. Jose does not keep in touch with his parents or siblings, as they live on the other side of the country. Jose's mother was recently sick, but a work trip prevented him from flying out to see her. Thankfully, he was able to send her some money to pay her hospital bills since he is doing do well financially.

## **Rodney Jenkins**

Rodney Jenkins is a 55-year-old billionaire that inherited his family business from his father. After working together for 5 years, Rodney and his father got in a huge argument and feuded over the business. In a yearlong lawsuit, Rodney managed to win ownership of the company. From that day forward, Rodney has not spoken to his father or the rest of his family who believe he made up lies to gain ownership. Rodney has a 4-story house right off the ocean. He loves to fish and go out on the boat, but rarely has time to do either. Growing up, he was very good at basketball and was sure to build a full-court basketball court on his estate. At a recent doctor's appointment, Rodney's doctor told him he needed to slow down and take better care of himself. Because no one else is around to help run the business, Rodney finds it impossible to do a better job taking care of himself through exercise, healthy foods, and less stress. He hires a live-in chef who cooks three meals a day for him.



## **Jasmine & Ben**

Jasmine and Ben fell in love in high school. They got married when they were just 22 years old and have been together for 5 years since. Both work hard to maintain a healthy living together and to pay the bills. They do not have much saved up for emergencies, but continue to try and grow their savings. Last month, Ben was in a car accident and ended up needing surgery on his leg. Financially, this was a hardship for the couple, but Jasmine was just happy Ben was okay. Ben will be healing from his accident for the next 4 weeks. During that time, he is unable to work and Jasmine must work double shifts to keep up with the bills. Each night when she comes home from work, Ben has dinner on the table and they talk about their day and the possibilities for the future. After dinner, they each take a seat on the sofa and read. Ben was a writing major in college, but never was able to land a job at a big publishing company. Jasmine was his reader. She enjoyed reading each piece and is still his biggest fan! Settling down with a good book has been an every night routine for the couple. This Sunday, both of their families will come over for their weekly Sunday dinner. Family has always been a huge part of their lives and they continue to enjoy seeing their nieces, nephews, siblings, and parents.

## **Shante**

Shante is a public defender. She works to defend people accused of crimes that cannot afford to hire representation on their own. Shante knew she wanted to be a public defender since she was 10-years-old after watching her mom help an innocent man get out of jail. Shante travels 1.5 hours to work each day, as she commutes from New Jersey to NYC. In addition to her work in the courtroom, Shante spends a lot of her time helping at a local non-profit for women in domestic abuse shelters. Because of her long hours in the city, Shante's nanny spends her weeknights bringing her two kids to after school activities and helping with their homework. On the weekend, Shante always makes an effort to plan a family outing on Saturday and hold a family dinner on Sundays.

## Jordan

Jordan began playing soccer when he was just 5 years old. He was part of a travel team or school team every season he possibly could have. He was often the best player on his team and practiced constantly to maintain his athleticism. As a teenager, Jordan began working at a soccer clinic where he taught soccer to 5 and 6-year-old children. His whole life was soccer and he planned to go to college and play at the university level. At the end of his senior year, he was accepted to UCLA with a soccer scholarship. He played soccer there for four years and was drafted to a minor league team. After three months, Jordan tore his ACL and was no longer able to play. He returned to his hometown and landed a job as the soccer coach at his old high school. The transition from the minor league team to becoming a high school coach resulted in a large salary decrease for Jordan. To help make up for the change in pay, Jordan also took on a part-time job at a local restaurant 4 nights a week. On Saturday, his soccer team will play in the State Championships!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Successful vs. Unsuccessful Worksheet

In the space provided below, add notes as your class discuss what it means to be successful verses what it means to be unsuccessful. These notes will help you throughout the remaining lessons.

Characteristics of being: <b>SUCCESSFUL</b>	Characteristics of being: <b>UNSUCCESSFUL</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Comparing Success and Happiness

Based on the Success Scale and Happiness Scale your group made, answer the questions below:

1. Who did your group deem as the most successful? Least successful?

Least Successful	Most Successful

2. Who did your group deem as the happiest? Least happy?

Least Happy	Happiest

3. Look at your tables above, was there anyone who was placed on the most successful AND happiest side of the scale? Who were these people?

4. Was there anyone who was on the most successful side for your first scale, but on the least happy side of your Happiness Scale? Who were they?

5. Why do you think a person might be deemed unsuccessful, but is still happy?

6. Why do you think a person might be unhappy, but actually quite successful?

7. What do YOU think makes a person successful? How does that compare with what your group members think about success?

## **Success Is Self-Defined**

By: Andres Mosses Buensuceso

*“Success is not something that is defined in a certain way and something that could be drawn. Success is pretty much something that you, and only you, define for yourself. Success is something money cannot buy and something that varies from one individual to another. For example, some people define success as taking good care of their families and spending enough time with them, something money can never buy.*

*A common misconception we have in life is that money is equal to success, especially in today’s materialistic world. Money does not always equal success but unfortunately we tend to measure our self-worth when we look at our income sheet. If we look at an individual with a sports car, we say he is more successful than us; however true success is defined by the person themselves as they go through life, exert the effort and remain happy and healthy in every step.”*

"The Learning Pit" Anchor Chart

(Louick n.d.)

