

Academic Acculturation

(Modified from the original text of Steve Suter, CSUB) <http://www.jyu.fi/mclinic/cis/academic.html>

Most students who do not succeed in college have the academic smarts to do college work, but lack "academic acculturation"--for whatever reason they do not have the general academic behaviors and attitudes that we, as professors, expect in our students. This handout is an attempt to save students who don't get it on their own, by listing our own expectations in terms of academic acculturation.

1. **Invest appropriate time in the courses.** Every 1-unit course at the university is supposed to be set up to require 40 hours per week of your time, including scheduled class meetings and lab work. The courses are definitely planned to require this much time and therefore deserve this commitment from you. Some students will need more than 40 hours per week because students process information at different rates and have differing backgrounds in the course material.
2. **Get actively engaged in the courses.** Listen rather than hear, look rather than see--literally take the course.
3. **Prepare for class.** You will get more out of class this way. Approach each reading and come to class ready for an intellectual workout. Get ready, assemble your resources, then apply them effectively. Get intense!! Many good students make reading notes in their notebook for the course and mark in the margin any text that they do not understand and get help later.
4. **Come to each class meeting to learn.** Listen, think, take notes, and elaborate on your notes as needed after class. Leave each class meeting a better educated person. Don't talk through the lecture with a friend. Don't disengage from class activities in order to "pack up" early. We promise to contribute an appropriate share of intellectual resources to the courses and expect you to do the same.
5. **Work at being a problem solver.** You will be exposed to ideas that you have not previously considered and perhaps don't understand. This is not an accident. Try to stretch the way you think to understand these new ideas. This will require mental effort. That's what learning is about!
6. **Be physically present.** Come to class on time. Don't extend class breaks beyond the announced time for resumption of class. Return to class after a class break. Don't make appointments or make work commitments that conflict with class.
7. **Attend demonstrations, films, and other classroom activities.** These are not "filler." Each is included for a reason, is an important part of the learning experience, and requires your full attention if you are to learn from it.
8. **Learn from your mistakes.** You will get extensive feedback from exams and other assignments. Get help if you don't understand the feedback.
9. **Find out what you have missed.** If you must miss class or arrive late, assume that you missed a lot of important things. Arrange in advance from whom you will get notes and discuss what you missed.
10. **Do the work on time.** Do not assume that it is OK to take an exam or turn in an assignment late. It is probably not OK.
11. **Be academically honest.** Cheating shows disrespect for a process that we, as professors, deeply respect.

Academically acculturated students are not better people, but they have a much easier time of it in college and they certainly get better grades!

Steve Suter 1-02-96