

# Learning Café Quick Study Tips

## WORKING WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

*As a student, you must deal with instructors. You must listen to instructors in class, ask questions, become familiar with different teaching styles, & become aware of what instructors expect of you on tests & assignments. Usually, you will learn to relate well to your instructors. But occasionally, you may run across an instructor with whom you do not. What then? In the end, getting along with your instructors is to your benefit. Being aware of the rights & responsibilities of students and instructors can help you anticipate potential problems & work to build positive relationships that promote success in your courses.*



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## Rights & Responsibilities

In all relationships, there are certain rights & responsibilities. What are the rights & responsibilities for students & instructors? As you will see, the rights apply to both parties, & many of the responsibilities are similar. However, the basic difference is that students are expected to focus on the job of learning while instructors focus on the job of teaching & evaluating progress & understanding.

STUDENTS	INSTRUCTORS
<b>RIGHTS</b>	
To be treated fairly & equally To be treated with dignity & respect To be treated with honesty	To be treated fairly & equally To be treated with dignity & respect To be treated with honesty
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	
Arrive on time & be prepared Attend all classes Follow the course outline Get involved, ask for feedback & direction Contribute to a positive learning environment Adapt to various teaching styles Complete & hand in assignments on time Avoid excuses Catch up on missed work Solve problems with instructor Make & keep appointments	Arrive on time & be prepared Attend all classes Provide clear, consistent expectations Provide feedback & direction Promote a positive learning environment Adapt to various learning styles Mark & return assignments promptly Avoid excuses Know the material Solve problems with students Make & keep appointments

## Problem Solving with your Instructor

It is usually best to talk directly with your instructor if you have a problem. How you approach the situation can make a big difference in the results of the discussion. Before approaching your instructor, first decide if the problem is related to understanding course content or if the problem relates to personal differences. Then, think about the following:

## Problems Related to Understanding Class Content

If the problem is based on the course, such as assignments or tests, ask yourself the following questions before you approach your instructor:

- Do I need to make up any missed work? If so, have I already found out from fellow classmates exactly what I missed?
- Do I need help with a specific assignment, project, or skill/topic? Have I put in a sufficient amount of effort on my own?

Then, either visit the instructor during office hours or make an appointment in advance.

- For assignments, bring what you have done with you, so your instructor can see what has already been completed or what attempts you have made to solve the problem yourself. You might also consult a Learning Café instructor to obtain some advice.
- For tests, be prepared with questions that focus on the content you are having trouble understanding. Don't expect the instructor to review every item with you.

## Problems Related to Personal Differences

If the problem appears to be a personal issue based on your reactions to the instructor (ex., teaching style, mannerisms, or behaviors), you may need to recognize that, while instructors may be able to make some adjustments, you must also be prepared to adjust your expectations. Before meeting with your instructor, consider the following:

- Have I carefully identified the specific behavior that is troubling me?
  - Have I considered why this behavior is troubling me? How does it make me feel? Why do I feel this way?
  - Is it possible that I am misunderstanding the behavior?
  - Is it possible that something about me is aggravating the situation?
- Have I thought about or taken any action to improve the situation?
- Am I prepared to talk openly about my feelings and to listen calmly to my instructor's perspective? Am I prepared to participate in finding a mutually agreeable solution?

Then, make an appointment to discuss your feelings & ideas with the instructor. Approach the meeting in a calm, rational fashion, & seek a resolution that is satisfactory to you both.

If the situation still does not improve after you have made sincere attempts to meet with your instructor & resolve any problems, you may choose to speak to a counselor to discuss the problem, and/or you may choose to speak to your instructor's supervisor. The supervisor will want to know what attempts you have already made to rectify the problem before addressing your concerns directly, so be sure you have explored all other avenues.

## Important Points to Remember:

- Take responsibility for your successes as well as your difficulties. You are ultimately in charge of your own success in school. Instructors don't *give* marks; you *earn* them.
- Take responsibility for meeting early with your instructor if you have any problems or concerns. Don't wait until the end of the course when it may be too late.
- Learn how to communicate effectively. Talk realistically about the problems you are having & how you have tried to solve the problem on your own. Don't lay blame or use excuses.
- Decide if other factors are contributing to the problem. For example, if your personal life is preventing you from achieving your goals, reevaluate your goals & make changes as needed so that you can succeed.

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / [learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca](mailto:learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca)  
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*