

Succeeding in the American Classroom

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A Typical U.S. Classroom

- **Format:** varied class sizes, from 5 to 500
- **Objectives:** critical thinking, applying knowledge
- **Assignments:** group projects, tests
- **Teaching methods:** Exploration (not lecturing)
- **Grades:** Attendance, Participation, Assignments
- **Expectations:** Initiative, studying outside class, engaged participation, new ideas, etc.



What to Expect in a U.S. Classroom

Classroom Expectations

- Interactive methods in class
- Participation, discussion
- Express own ideas
- Challenge professors and other students
- Student Rights and Responsibilities



Why do Professors expect what they do?

Cultural Values!





Split into 4 groups

Each group gets 2 envelopes

Use index card to brainstorm & record your answers to the question,

“What expectations from your professors might come from this American Value?”



Advice from CSU Faculty



- Ask questions when you don't understand
- Talk with faculty – this is not an inconvenience!
- Practice your writing skills - writing research papers, describing results, ideas, and especially analytical thinking



Phrases to help you Speak Up in Class:

Begin a Topic:

- “I think/feel/believe that...”
- “The author/text seems to be saying...”
- “In my experience...”

Follow up on an earlier topic:

- “Along with what you said...”
- “I would argue that...”
- “Another related thought” or “Another way to look at it...”

Use phrases you hear your classmates use!

- Write them down for future use



How to Engage in Class

Speaking up

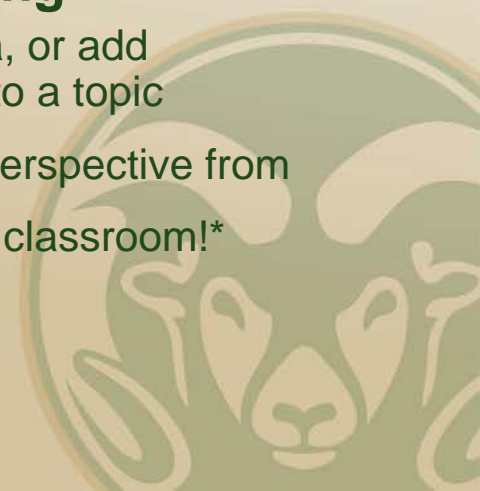
- Understand what others have said
- Raise your hand if you have an idea or a question
- Try writing down your ideas when you don't get the chance to speak in class. Bring anything that wasn't brought up in class to your professor after.
- Not ok to interrupt
- But ok to disagree, as long as you...

Give evidence to support your ideas

- Speak from personal experience
- Use examples from the text
- For every *claim* (opinion or thought), make sure you give *evidence*.

Critical thinking

- Complicate the idea, or add another dimension to a topic
 - Create an original perspective from
- *Highly valued in the classroom!*



7 Ways to Not Succeed

International students who have not done well academically provided us with **seven reasons why:**

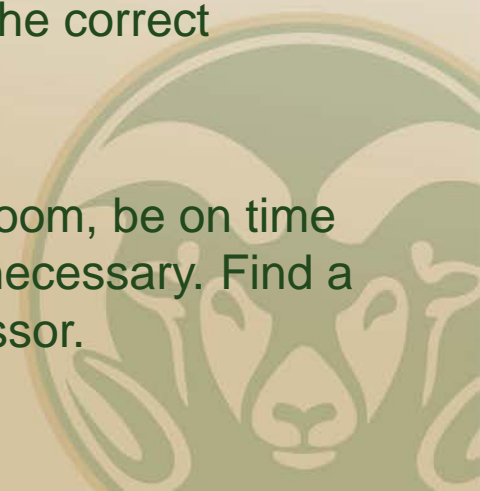
1. Poor Test Results
2. Poor Attendance
3. Poor Written Component
4. Unprepared for Class
5. Assignments Done Carelessly
6. Never Attended Class
7. Late To Class



Addressing: Poor Test Results

For every hour of class, 3 hours of study!

- Find your study method: alone or in a group?
- Learn your best study method by trial and error:
You will not know if it's working until your first test results!
- A professor is never happy about giving a low grade on an exam. Visit during office hours to ask about what you did wrong, what the correct answers are, and how you might improve the situation.
- Change your Study Habits. Sit in the front row of the classroom, be on time for every class. Take notes and tape record your lecture if necessary. Find a tutor. Make a plan based on your discussion with the professor.



Addressing: Poor Attendance

- Never miss a class unless you are ill.
- If you miss a class, ask professor how to make up work.
- Attend Class, be on time
- Participate—ask & answer questions, work with others.



Addressing: Poor Written Component

- Final papers are common
- Begin preparing as soon as possible. You cannot leave it until the last week!
- Proofread your work carefully before submitting it to your professor
- Use the Writing Center
- Practice writing well; ask professor for tips.
- Use citation software for bibliography



Addressing: Assignments Done Carelessly

- Complete assignments before class.
- Talk to your instructor to make sure you understand the assignment. Make an appointment during office hours, or approach them after class.
- Extra work in the library is common. Expect to read textbooks plus other required reading.
- Read, Read, Read!
- Each academic department has a librarian that can help you find materials for a research project



Addressing: Never Attending Class

- We cannot emphasize enough the importance of attending class!
- Many professors make class attendance a percentage of your final grade.
- Professors cover material in class that is not found in your readings



Addressing: Being Late to Class

- Arriving late to class is discourteous and demonstrates a lack of respect for the professor and the material he/she is trying to teach.
- Take steps to improve your time management skills.
- Arrive early
- Leave late



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Questions?



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