

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS WITH INSTRUCTORS

Why is establishing good relationships with instructors important?

If you have ever had to ask for a letter of recommendation, knowing an instructor may have come in handy. However, there are many other benefits to getting to know the person leading your class. From better performance in a class, to easier dialogue if something goes awry, establishing a good relationship with your instructor is a wonderful way to start off the class on the right foot.

Tips on Establishing Relationships with Instructors

- Introduce yourself to your professor at the end of your first class.
- Use the title your instructor prefers (Dr., Prof., etc.) in written and verbal communications.
- Drop by his/her office during posted office hours.
- Say “Hi” when you see them around campus.
- Go to class! Regular attendance is not only beneficial grade-wise, but is noticed by your instructor.
- Don’t be late! Professors usually use the first few minutes of class to make vital announcements.
- Sit towards the front and pay attention. There is a relationship between your distance from the professor and your distance from an “A” grade.
- Always bring your notebook and any other needed supplies for class. This shows you are prepared and interested.
- Ask questions and be actively engaged with the lectures. If your instructor asks for input, volunteer.
- Be courteous in class. When asking questions, do not be hostile or demanding.
- Thank the professor whenever appropriate. If a professor does something they are not obligated to do (making special appointments, answering e-mails on evenings and weekends, giving extensions,) let them know how much you appreciate their support.
- Congratulate your instructor on their achievements. Instructors are often high quality researchers and many times are currently publishing books, journal articles and maybe even winning awards. Everyone likes their accomplishments acknowledged, even professors.
- Tell your instructor you like the class. Students rarely realize that professors worry about how a class is going and would like to hear feedback. Look for an occasion during which you can slip in, in a casual but sincere way, that you are enjoying the time spent in lecture.



Tip for Success

Whenever you meet with a professor or instructor, make sure you are well-prepared. Think of questions in advance and make sure you know where you are meeting to be on-time.

Benefits of Establishing Good Relationships with Instructors

Improved Coursework

- You will receive more specific feedback and instruction.
- You will know more precisely what the instructor is looking for on assignments.

Prevent Problems from Developing in the Future

- With a good relationship formed, issues such as disagreements on grading, emergency absences, etc. are easier to address.
- Sets the foundation for any discussion that will come up, positive or negative.

Name Recognition Goes a Long Way

- When a professor knows who you are, opportunities may arise that would be otherwise non-existent.
- Letters of Recommendation will be much more positive and beneficial if coming from an instructor you know more personally.



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