

# What's Up, Doc?

## Talking With Professors



### Do...

- Be prepared
- Show respect
- Listen to suggestions
- Be attentive
- Be straightforward
- Maintain eye contact
- Be patient
- Take advantage of office hours
- Email or phone for an appointment
- Have appropriate body language, i.e. eye contact and body posture
- Be willing to do extra work
- Be calm and rational
- Be honest
- Confront issues before they become problems

### Don't...

- Ask for something and not follow through
- Make excuses
- Lie
- Be aggressive
- Interrupt
- Haggle over numbers
- Whine
- Turn down a second chance
- Have a bad attitude toward the subject matter
- Assume you can't do the work

### Learn To Be Your Own Best Advocate

To gain the most from your college education, you must be an assertive and active participant rather than let or expect others to do the work for you. This includes seeking information on campus by asking questions, making phone calls, and speaking with faculty, staff, administrators and fellow students. How do you make this happen?

1. **Take control of your own learning.** If you don't understand something in class, you need to take the responsibility to ask your professor for help.
2. **Accept responsibility for your success.** Accept the challenge and responsibility to meet with each of your professors at least 3 times a semester to ask questions that can better help you understand the material. You control your own success rate both in college and in the world of work.
3. **Be an optimal learner.** Every learner has barriers to overcome. As a learner, if you respond to a difficult assignment in a passive manner, you're using a strategy that cuts you off from the very learning you need. If you fail to ask questions and speak with people who can help you, you must also be responsible enough to acknowledge that your low expectations made the class less than meaningful.

## Advocating For Yourself When You Meet Your Professors

If you experience frustrations in certain classes, remember that your professors will neither know nor understand what they are unless you articulate them clearly. Becoming aggressive or saying nothing may bring you momentary relief and satisfaction but, in the long run, you will not emerge the winner. The following are some suggestions that should help you more effectively interact with your professors.

- A. Organize questions to ask the professor before you walk into the office. Make your questions as specific as possible so you receive the answers you need.

### General Statements/Questions

1. I don't understand the material you went over in class.
2. I don't understand why I received such a low grade on my paper.
3. The material in this chapter doesn't make any sense to me.

### Specific Statements/Questions

- I don't understand how to apply the theory you talked about in class today.
- I don't understand why you wrote that my grammar and punctuation are poor. I worked on it a long time. You didn't mark any errors for me. Please show me where I made those mistakes.
- I don't understand what the author means by "economic downsizing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Why and how is that relevant to what we are studying?

- B. Take the responsibility of separating issues that you need to discuss with the professor vs. those that are your concern only, e.g. (1) You need help with reading assignments; (2) You need help organizing your notes; (3) You need a study partner to review for the test. Help for the first two of these examples can be sought at the Learning Center. That is your responsibility!

- C. Always remember two important rules when you interact with your professors:

1. Recognize what are appropriate expectations for your professor to fulfill and what are beyond the professor's control, but fully within your control.
2. It is not often what you say, but how you say it, that people respond to!

