



Today's Collegian



Mr. Breitsprecher's Edition

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FREE!

High School Versus College



Most college students would agree – there are HUGE differences between high school and college. Let's face it, after 13 years (k-12) of being required to attend school, most of us are ready for something different – change is good!

Some say that the biggest difference is that high school is structured to control students and learning. College is more unstructured. High school teachers accept a great deal of responsibility for each student's success. College professors are not responsible for student learning in the same manner – students are expected to accept more of that responsibility.

High school students are expected to do as they are told and follow the rules; college students are expected to make responsible choices. High school students that do not do what they are told or do not follow rules will probably be "corrected" in a variety of ways. College students that do not make responsible choices are likely to flunk out.

Nation-wide, it is common for almost *half* of the freshman class to drop out within that first year. Because we choose to go to college and pay for that privilege (it is expensive), adjusting to the differences between high school and college and successfully completing a degree program is important. Once we make the decision to attend

college, the outcome is up to us.

In high school, instruction is directed – teachers are clear about what is being taught, what students should be able to do, and what will be on tests. In college, it is up to each student to read and understand assigned material. High school classes will "re-teach" areas that students have trouble with. College professors will move on – those that are not ready will have to accept failing grades and try again, if they can.








Does this sound unfair or harsh? That depends on your point

of view. Those that earn college degree have something of value and have demonstrated that they are independent learners, able to accept responsibility for their lives, and ready to work with others to achieve goals. Many employers value this.

To those with degrees, the higher expectations at universities make their diplomas more valuable. To those that flunk out, yes, it might seem unfair. The real question is this, does anyone really care who I choose to blame if I flunk out of college?

College demands more of

College Is Different Than High School

-  Students are responsible for monitoring their own progress and for recognizing when they need additional help.
-  Classes meet less often and for fewer hours per week.
-  Instruction is mainly by lecture, note taking skills are essential.
-  An entire course is completed in 16 weeks or less. There is more work and less time to do it in.
-  Final grades may be determined by just 2 or 3 test scores.
-  Writing assignments will be much more involved and the expectations for quality will be much higher.
-  Students need to be able to manage all of their responsibilities and commitments, including job, social, and family matters along with sports or extra-curricular activities.

Check It Out!



Tips & Tricks for First Year Students

For some, understanding and accepting the differences between high school and college will be the difference between success and failure. Here are some ideas to help:

<http://www.smu.edu/alec/tips.html>

students and requires that students achieve these higher demands by taking responsibility for their learning.

The good news is that students are "accepted" into college because they have demonstrated academic skills that indicate they can succeed. Most campuses have a variety of support services and programs to help students earn degrees.

The sad news is that these services are often underutilized. Stop by a campus tutorial center the first few weeks of classes – the

place may be empty! College professors all know that some of their students need extra help – they also know that some students are not seeking it.

Students that are not ready for the transition to college get a double-whammy: not only are the learning standards and expectations higher, but it is the professors job to let some students fail. Students that are not ready to meet expectations in lower level classes are unlikely to be ready for the higher level classes where professional skills and

standards are taught.

Demanding degrees, like a *Bachelors of Business Administration with and emphasis on Accounting*, cannot possibly accommodate students that are not ready to accept responsibility for their learning. It holds the rest of the class back – remember, everyone chose to be there and paid for the privilege.

In high school, effort counts a great deal. It is rare for a student that actually tries to fail. In college, professors expect students' "best effort." By itself, this is probably not enough. Students are expected to demonstrate higher levels of understanding and apply learning to a variety of new situations.

Colleges try to structure their programs so that all students can succeed if they are ready to accept responsibility for their learning and seek appropriate help when needed. At the university level, it is accepted that some students will not be successful. This is part of life – sometimes, failure is what we need to make changes to move us towards our goals. At a university, this is considered part of the "learning process."






Once we make the decision to continue our education, are accepted into college, and pay tuition; the "smart choice" is to accept the responsibilities that go along with being a student. Professors want to see their students succeed – many find it difficult to watch students struggle. It is part of the job, however.

Professors hope that all students will take advantage of their opportunities at their schools. They are also expected to "dismiss" those students that are not ready to take advantage of these opportunities.






Whether a student achieves an outstanding education, barely squeaks by, or fails is up to the student. This is true in both high school and college. In high school, teachers and administrators are happy if students do what they are told and follow the rules.

College professors expect much more – isn't that really what a good education is all about?




High School Responsibilities

-  By law, carefully identify student needs, write a plan to accommodate those needs, and monitor the effectiveness of this plan (IEP).
-  Provide a structured learning environment where ALL students can achieve academic success.
-  Parents or guardians make many decisions.
-  Students' main responsibility is to attend, do what they are told, and follow the rules – the school accepts virtually all other responsibilities.
-  Document student achievement by administering standardized tests.




College Responsibilities

-  Inform students of rights, responsibilities, and maintain confidential student records (separate from the college's educational records).
-  Provide reasonable access to programs/ services that are offered.
-  Accept and identify the impairment that causes the substantial limitation based on documented student needs.
-  Make reasonable accommodations based on the qualifying criteria.
-  Apply academic standards uniformly and fairly. Students that are ready to move forward cannot be held back because of other students that are not prepared.

Colleges Are NOT Required To:

-  Reduce or adjust the essential requirements of a course/program.
-  Identify or test for exceptional needs.
-  Supervise students.

Student Responsibility To:

-  Meet the college's qualifications and essential technical, academic, and institutional standards, including the community standards and the code of academic integrity.
-  Act as an independent adult.
-  Advocate for their learning needs, utilize appropriate services when offered, and accept responsibility for those outcomes.