



# Today's Collegian



Mr. Breitsprecher's Edition

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## Watch Your P's & Q's!



P's and Q's refers to "pints and quarts" – it is an expression from the British Isles. When someone says, "watch your p's and q's," they are referring to manners. Many people that drink (pints and quarts) become less than polite and perhaps even rude and obnoxious.

To *Today's Collegian*, referring to "P's and Q's" means being polite and respectful. These are important skills in the "real world." They represent an essential skill at college. Remember, professors expect students to be ready to accept responsibility for their actions.

High school is more structured; students that are rude or inconsiderate will be "corrected" in a variety of ways. Inappropriate behavior in college will be "corrected" too – often by "academic dismissal" (earning an F). Adults should not need to be told when they are being rude, especially those in professional training programs.

Please think about it – everyone pays for the privilege of being in college. College classes are structured so that students have the opportunity to "take" a variety of skills from their participation. Professors design classes so that those who are ready and motivated to take advantage of learning opportunities will be able to do so. The person that is in school to get a good education does not want to be

in classes with students that prevent them from learning.

Manners "grease the wheels" of social interactions and relationships. PLEASE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS! Being polite and respectful will make it easier to succeed in college. Being rude or disrespectful may make it difficult or impossible to succeed in college.

High school teachers are required to accommodate ALL learning styles with an "appropriate

education." College professors are only required to provide appropriate accommodations for documented needs that do not alter the "essential content" of instruction or a degree program.

High school teachers are expected to accommodate "rude" learning styles, college professors are not. An essential component of virtually all professional training programs is an ability to work effectively with others.

### Classroom Manners 101

Being polite and respectful in class is not "rocket science." It is really just about using behavior and nonverbal communication to communicate that we value our education.

1. **Do not carry on private conversations in class.** This behavior indicates that you are not paying attention. It is also disruptive. Professors often deal with disruptive students by structuring class so those students will quickly fail. It is their job to work with those that are ready to move forward. It is not their job to control people that cannot control themselves.
2. **Come to on time.** College classes move faster than those in high school. Students pay to be there – good students are there to learn. Coming late is a disruption. While different professors will have varying levels of tolerance for lateness, none are likely to accept that a student is consistently late – this is rude.
3. **Do not cut the instructor off at the end of class.** In some high schools, it is common for students to start putting notebooks and books away early – college professors have a right to expect more. Let professors finish their thoughts at the end of a class period and let them dismiss the class when they are ready. Please think about this, packing up and leaving early is like shouting, "SHUT UP!"

Check It Out!



## Classroom Etiquette is Important!

Bellevue Community College maintains a Website that offers more information about the many ways etiquette benefits students:

<http://scidiv.bcc.ctc.edu/LS/Teaching/ClassEtiquette.html>

**Courtesy**

Being polite and courteous is the key that opens doors. ALL difficult situations are easier to handle if we are accepting, respectful, and mindful of our manners. How we present ourselves when we are trying to solve a problem may be just as important as the facts of the problem itself – sometimes even more so.

Remember, schools have many departments and faculty and staff that work together. In a bureaucracy, things can happen quickly or they can happen slowly. Most people that work at schools want to help others, but they are human. When you come to work, do you start with the easiest problems or do you immediately go to the most difficult ones? Being

polite and respectful can put our problems at the top of someone's list of things to do. Being rude and disrespectful can put us on the bottom of that list.

Being courteous shows people that we are working to make things as easy as possible for everyone involved. Being rude and having a "chip on our shoulder" does not help – in fact, sometimes it indicates that we will never be happy with a situation no matter how it turns out. Do you want to help people that will be unhappy with anything you do?

**Nonverbal Communication**

Those that study how people communicate can show that the things we DON'T say can be just as important, or more so, than what we DO say. Being in any given

situation communicates something about us. The way we behave in that situation communicates even more information. Learning to use nonverbal communication to show people we are ready to work with them is important, especially in college and in professional careers.

Some behaviors in class are just rude: sleeping, having private conversations, reading non-class related materials, yawning frequently, constantly challenging an instructor, and packing up to go BEFORE class is dismissed.

Developing good working relationships with people is important – we all respond well to someone that pays attention, maintains eye-contact, and cooperates. When in class, please ask yourself, "What type of message am I sending this professor?"

**Don't Insult Professors**

Wise people will not punch a 600 pound gorilla in the nose – likewise, insulting or creating a conflict with a college professor is not likely to be a game we can win.

Even the nicest people have limits as to what they can accept. Some professors are more understanding than others, but all have their limits. Most students want to earn good grades – being polite and courteous helps.

Manners are especially important when there are problems. Many find asking for help or talking about a problem challenging – it becomes even more difficult if the working relationship we have built is "tarnished" by inconsiderate or rude behavior. Most of us will feel better about resolving problems if we are confident that we conducted ourselves in a positive, respectful, and polite manner.

Have you ever asked for help from someone that you have offended or insulted? It is not an easy thing to do – with hindsight, would it have been easier to have built a positive working relationship from the start?

Watching our P's and Q's can prevent many problems in life – why not take advantage of that in school? If there are problems, watching our P's and Q's will make them easier to solve.

*(Classroom Manners 101, continued)*

4. **Do not ask instructors to repeat information that you missed when you have skipped class.** While high school teachers are expected to accommodate an "absent" learning style, college professors will not. Many professors will structure class so it is impossible to succeed by skipping class – if you do miss class, have a good excuse and accept responsibility for what you missed.
5. **Turn off cell phones and pagers.** There are some behaviors that demonstrate we do not understand what we are doing. Having a phone go off in class is a clear indication that a student is not thinking about others and does not understand or accept why they are in class.
6. **Only miss class when there is a good reason and, when absent, communicate the reason to your professor.** Many courses will require this, but it is always appropriate to let professors know that you understand that you are expected to be in class. Today, students that do not intend to go to class should sign up for online courses instead.
7. **Do not argue – be willing to accept that reasonable people can disagree.** Understanding and accepting your role as a student is important. Professors cannot argue with students about how they feel about a course's content. Remember, we can accept and learn things we don't agree with 100%. School is a time for learning – after we graduate, we will have more opportunities to apply what we have learned as we believe is appropriate.
8. **Do not complain about an instructors teaching style.** College professors are not required to structure class around the individual needs of each student. Some will take remarks about how they teach as indications that students are not ready to accept the differences between high school and college.
9. **Do not blame the instructor when you have problems.** They can all demonstrate that other students are succeeding. College is about more than teaching students' skills, it is about selecting students that are ready to work towards earning their degrees. An Accountant, for example, has to be ready to perform complex analysis and get things done. Students need to be ready to accept responsibility for their learning and work with campus resources to move them towards being self-directing, mature adults.