

IF YOU ARE A FRESHMAN - READ THIS!! (If you are not – you already know it ☺)
“Perceived Differences Between High School Teachers and College Professors”
- What Your Fellow Students Say *

Former freshmen students ... identified several differences between high school teachers and college professors, the most important of which centered on the fact that **college professors expect their students to be more responsible partners in the teaching-learning process.**

Several students' responses focused on the syllabus that college professors use to communicate the structure, procedures, and requirements of their classes to students. One student commented about this by saying, "High school teachers tell students what's due the next day, whereas college professors expect students to read for themselves what's due in the syllabus." This idea was reinforced by another student who said, "College teachers don't tell you what you're supposed to do. They just expect you to do it. High school teachers tell you about five times what you are supposed to do."

The following poignant comment from another student communicates the feeling of frustration and helplessness that can be experienced by a freshman who has not yet fully adapted to this greater level of responsibility. "College teachers expect their students to read the syllabus and the classroom is set up to where it is sink or swim. Do the work or fail. High school teachers reminded us about the deadlines for our projects everyday and tried to help us if we were struggling. "

A second aspect of increased student responsibility for learning in college emerged in comments about the difference between what is taught by high school teachers and college professors. One student explained this difference by saying, "High school teachers teach you what's in your textbooks. College teachers expect you to actually read your textbooks." A second student highlighted this from a more personal perspective with the following comment: "High school teachers... kind of hold your hand through things." A third student's comment summarized the concept of increased student responsibility quite succinctly by saying, "College knowledge is self-taught."

A final comment lends a cultural perspective to the different atmosphere of academic responsibility in high school and college and the differential way this responsibility is valued by students. "In high school, you were a dork if you got good grades and cared about what was going on in your classes. In college, you're a dork if you don't."

Another responsibility-related difference that students reported between high school teachers and college professors was adherence to rules. One student noted that, "College teachers expect much more from you. There are no late assignments or make-up tests. They do not hold your hand anymore." The following comment helped to explain the potentially negative results of this difference for college students who are accustomed to their old high school ways. "The biggest difference between the two was that in high school, I could usually get an assignment done whenever I could and there wouldn't be much of a consequence if it was late." ← THIS WILL NOT WORK ANYMORE!