Taking Charge of Your Learning (SLANT)

Who is responsible for a student learning, the teacher or the student?

Many assume it is the teacher’s sole responsibility and the student is a passive receptacle of knowledge. When some students struggle in a class, they claim the teacher is boring, long-winded, or too demanding. This attitude fails to capitalize on the important role a student can play in his or her own learning. Ultimately, the student is responsible for his or her learning and the student is the person who has to live the grade he or she earns. Therefore, it is in the student’s best interest to take responsibility for what he or she gets from the course.

One way to get more from a course is to reinforce your instructor. There is strong evidence that instructors who receive positive feedback from their students tend to teach better, and vice-a-versa. Consider how you would feel if you were teaching a group of students and looked out to see several sleeping, reading the paper, etc. Would this encourage you to work harder? Unlikely. Instead, it might be easy to get discouraged and give up. Consider the following as a way to reinforce your teacher and get more from your education. It is easy to do, just remember SLANT.

Sit up straight and pay attention

Lean forward and communicate interest

Ask questions when you don’t understand

Nod and smile (it helps your teacher know you are interested)

Track what’s happening in the classroom