

How to Participate in a College Class (and the Importance of Attendance)

What does participation mean?

Think: a mix between quality and quantity of contributions, focus, preparedness, and respect for others' contributions.

- ❖ Contributing meaningfully to class discussions;
- ❖ listening to what your instructor and classmates are saying;
- ❖ taking active notes;
- ❖ asking questions, giving examples, and supplying evidence of personal awareness of concepts (Petress 2006);
- ❖ and, referencing your text(s) and notes.

The Use of Electronics in Class

- ❖ Studies have shown that the use of electronics for purposes other than note-taking distracts others and leads to poorer performance in the class overall (See: Ravizza and Henion 2014 and Sana, Weston, & Cepeda 2013).

Why work in partners and groups?

- ❖ Studies have shown that students who participate actively in class and discuss materials in peer groups do better on exams (Rau and Heyl 1990) and learn more overall (Michael 2006); plus you have the chance to:
 - ❖ practice expressing yourself verbally (use your mind, and not just your memory);
 - ❖ debate and explore your own position on a subject;
 - ❖ improve your critical-thinking skills;
 - ❖ and, ask questions and to clarify confusing points.

Why is it so important to come to class?

- ❖ Although the majority of work for a college class is done at home, during class material is often synthesized, background information and context are given, connections are made with other texts, and the opportunity for engaging more deeply with materials in conversation with others is provided.

Bring the Text to Class (preferably a printed version!)

- ❖ For reference!
- ❖ College classes are not (supposed to be) about your instructor simply giving you information, but about you learning how to articulate your own opinions and ideas. Evidence to support your claims are in the texts.