



Fairness Toolkit: Create Better Learning Opportunities

At times you will have an instructor at UBC who is not a good match for you, whether it be a personality clash, a difference of opinion, or any number of reasons. You may feel that Professor X is impolite, abrupt, too serious, unclear, or random. Simply put, you don't like Professor X. However, does that mean that you cannot learn the course material? The key to success in a course where you are not experiencing a good fit with the professor is a matter of separating liking and learning.

Step 1: Evaluate

Identify the professor's unique style: Narrow down the aspect that troubles you. For example:

- Communicating with students (not listening)
- Assessing your performance (marking unfairly)
- Providing feedback and assistance (only criticizes and is not helpful)
- Organizing course materials or class time (We never know what to expect)
- Dealing with student requests (The last time I asked for help, I just got in more trouble)



What do you control? What is outside your control? Remember, you can't change anyone, but you can change how you experience the situation.

Step 2: Act - Take Control of the Experience

Control your learning experience by changing the way you "think" about the instructor. Change the "way" you experience your instructors—adapt both your behaviour and attitude.

Adaptive Behaviours	Adaptive Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body language – positive and alert, no eye rolling, yawning, texting• Sit up front be engaged• Be prepared – have you done the readings?• Participation – ask questions and offer answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seek to understand – not criticize• Talk about your goals and ask for advice• Be generous with your tolerance/understanding• Be respectful and accept criticism



Office of the Ombudsperson for Students

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smile – be friendly and open• Arrive early for class – show interest• Cooperate – are you a positive and productive group member?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Realize some instructors have little teaching experience and/or formal training• Get to know your instructor• Compliment your instructor• Look around – how are other students responding?• Put your best foot forward and start over!
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Step 3: Reflect

What is going on now? Why is this happening? How can things be done better? Can you take what you learned from this experience and apply it to future similar situations? Will you look for opportunities to expand your repertoire of experiences? Visit the Resources page of www.ombudsoffice.ubc.ca to view more toolkits to help you navigate your studies at UBC.