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.

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<tr>
<th>Adaptive Behaviours</th>
<th>Adaptive Attitudes</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Body language – positive and alert, no eye rolling, yawning, texting</td>
<td>• Seek to understand – not criticize</td>
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<td>• Sit up front be engaged</td>
<td>• Talk about your goals and ask for advice</td>
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<td>• Be prepared – have you done the readings?</td>
<td>• Be generous with your tolerance/understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Participation – ask questions and offer answers</td>
<td>• Be respectful and accept criticism</td>
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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.