



Learning & Academic Resources Dept.
Long Beach City College
4901 E Carson St
Long Beach, CA 90808

Most experienced teachers suffer in agony as they watch incoming students repeat the same mistakes year after year. Here is their list of what not to do.

Learn from
experience

Mistake #1- Lack of motivation and commitment.

This is the number one problem according to most teachers. Lack of motivation and commitment reduce effectiveness and take more energy. What to do?

Cure - Fake it if you have to. Tell yourself you want to learn, want to improve, want to do better. It will be like taking an “intelligence pill.” You will do better and become more effective. Review long-term goals. If school is where you want to be, then do it right. Be enthusiastic about learning. Make your commitment to education an investment in yourself. Review goals and priorities. Build up motivation and commitment.

Mistake #2- Expressing negative comments about school, class or a teacher.

Negative comments are like a virus. They sap interest, concentration and motivation. They are also highly contagious. Avoid them like the plague.

Cure - Think positive, act positive, be positive.

Mistake #3- Chronically behind, lack of time and procrastination.

These are three separate problems, but they have the same net result. They start a negative feedback loop called the “downward spiral syndrome.” You get discouraged or distracted and fall further behind.

Cure - Identify why you put things off and then identify one part of the task and begin with that. Take small, but consistent, steps to tackle a task.

Mistake #4- Poor concentration and boredom.

These are ruinous. They mean you are just going through the motions. They also lead to the downward spiral syndrome.

Cure - This is a motivation issue. Remind yourself as to why you must do well in this class. Try a cost/benefit analysis to show how your choices affect your class success.

Mistake #5- Too much memorization of ideas.

Many students emphasize memorizing individual facts and procedures. Each course is like a “drawer in a filing cabinet.” Walk into class, open the drawer, and insert the facts. When class is over, close the drawer until next time.

Cure - Learn by association, metaphor, and analogy. Make connections and comparisons to understand the information.

Mistake #6- Coupling of grades, confidence and self-esteem.

Students who “turn it around”, who make significant improvements; often say that the most important thing they did was to gain confidence and improve self-esteem. That’s too bad, because everyone should be able to say, “I feel good about myself. I do the best I can.”

Cure - Poor grades may mean lack of prerequisites, lack of time, motivation, study skills or the wrong choice of course or career. If your confidence lags see a counselor.

Mistake #7- Don’t go to class.

This starts three small-scale negative feedback loops. You lose touch with the class and your interest sags. Then your performance will be negatively affected.

Cure - Be a responsible learner. Go to class. Ask questions. Build interest.

Success creates
success

Develop self-
esteem

Thanks to the Pasadena City College Learning Assistance
Center for some of the information included here.

If this was helpful you can get more useful information by taking a **Learn 11** class.