

Open Forum

is an opportunity for individuals to express their opinions in an extended format by invitation. Opinions and topics are solely the responsibility of the writer. The G presents this to make the paper more accessible to the campus and to offer our readers greater diversity of viewpoints. This week, Instructor James Musgrave tells students what to look for in order for them to get the most out of their education.

By James Ray Musgrave
English Instructor

I came into education from business and industry and there are some important things I have learned about what students should be looking for in the classroom if they want the most out of their education. If I were a student, I would want to know what was expected of me once I got the technical skills that college teaches me.

87 percent of all employees lose their jobs today because they did not have the people skills and communication skills necessary to be valuable to the modern corporation or business. That means that if you sit inside a classroom and listen to a dull lecture that you could just as well get on your own by reading a text, then you are not learning people skills.

My years at the Industrial Relations Center, California Institute of Technology taught me that modern corporations need employees who:

- work well with others,
- are able to write down their proposals and money-saving ideas in simple, down-to-earth prose,
- and are then able to sell

their ideas to others within the organization.

In other words, you can be a straight-A student in college, but if you have not practiced working with others, writing down simple ideas in a coherent proposal, or given a persuasive presentation to a group, then you are *not* getting your money's worth inside the classroom.

Personnel executives have talked to me about this problem and I have, as a result, changed my curriculum so that my students are able to learn these people skills in a friendly, no-pressure atmosphere whereby they are taught to become teachers, presenters, collaborators, and learners.

That brings me to another area of student need. I really believe that students need to know which classes and professors are giving them more "bang for the buck." In other words, if I were an enterprising you student, I would collect information on a variety of classes and instructors and publish a book that gives me the "lowdown" on the courses that will add to my total education program.

This "coming together" of students for their own good is necessary because the United States seems to be giving our educational

system a back seat to other priorities (like war). It is now up to you folks to see to it that you don't get short-changed concerning the survival skills you will require to stay employed in an increasingly competitive and communications-oriented society.

So, the next time you're getting bored by an instructor that does not get you actively involved in the learning process, you can come to the "realization" that you do have a choice. We used to walk out on courses that were deemed "irrelevant" to the mood of the 1960s, so you can deem today's irrelevant classes in similar way—without dropping out of the system all together, of course.

I am afraid that the gap between the haves and the have-nots will be getting wider, and it is up to students to make certain they are getting the people skills necessary for "real world" survival. As an experienced management development trainer and English instructor at Grossmont, I say you make your own destiny, by choosing your instruction wisely and by communicating the positive choices to your friends and fellow students. You only have your future to win and the past to shrug-off forever.