

How Students Can Handle Conflict with Faculty

Tips from the Office of Human Rights and Positive Environment

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10 Tips for Addressing Conflict

1. Make an appointment to speak with the instructor in private; don't try to have a discussion at the beginning or end of class.
2. Seek first to understand. Ask open-ended questions. For example, "Can you help me understand why...?" "Can you explain this more fully?"
3. Think win-win. How can you both come out of this with better understanding? Focus on finding a mutually agreeable solution.
4. Refrain from judgment. There is always more than one side to a story; try to understand the other side, too.
5. Treat the other person with dignity and respect, set a respectful tone, and expect to be treated respectfully as well.
6. Separate the people from the problem. Be soft or gentle with people, clear with problems.
7. Listen to each other in turn, avoiding aggressive or accusatory language. Speak for yourself without blaming, name-calling, etc. Try using statements such as "I feel..." or "I don't understand..." or "I wonder..."
8. Respond, don't just react. Take time to think before you speak.
9. Keep an open mind. Be open to the possibility that the grade is appropriate for reasons you did not understand. That's OK; that's called learning.

10. Seek support. Ask the departmental Chair, an academic advisor, the Student Advocate, or the Human Rights Office for advice or a Volunteer Mediator for assistance. For information on how to contact them, go to <http://www.unb.ca/humanrights/volunteer-mediators.html>.

Bibliography

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