



- Take a problem-solving approach to conflict, and try to see the other person as your collaborator rather than your enemy.
- Use assertive language such as 'I feel' and 'I think', rather than aggressive language such as 'You always' and 'You never'
- Don't interrupt your instructor when he or she is talking, and try hard to listen and understand the other's point of view.
- Compromise, Compromise, Compromise!!!
- If the exchange doesn't go well, learn from the experience and plan how you will do things a little differently next time.

Body language - When asserting yourself:

- Look your instructor in the eye
- Hold your body upright
- Consciously relax your shoulders
- Try to breathe normally and don't hold your breath
- Keep your face relaxed

- Speak at a normal conversational volume (don't yell or whisper).

Keeping your head - Despite your best efforts to be direct and calm, the conversation could take an undesirable turn. If so, you could:

- Tell the instructor you'll take up the subject again at another time, and leave.
- If you decide to stick it out - remain calm, steer the conversation back to the original point, and try to understand the other person's point of view.
- Appreciate there may be other issues motivating his/her behavior.
- Afterwards, learn from the experience and try to think up better ways to negotiate a similar scenario.

If issues remain unsolved, seek assistance and direction from a CCSN advisor, counselor or student advocate.



Recruitment, Retention, & Tutorial Services

Charleston Campus - 651-7367
Cheyenne Campus - 651-2626
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Recruitment, Retention, & Tutorial Services



Speaking and Relating to Your Instructors



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Step 1: Clearly and concisely formulate in your mind the reason for speaking or meeting with your instructor. Some examples:

- Performing poorly on a quiz, exam, or other class assignment
- Being unclear about an assignment or timeline, etc.
- Wanting to turn in an assignment late or taking a test at a different time
- Missing class or having to miss class in the future due to health or emergency reasons
- Wanting to ask the instructor for a letter of recommendation or for career advice.



Step 2: Determine When to Meet - Once you have identified the specific reason(s) for speaking with your instructor, determine how quickly to do so.

- If you need to speak with him/her as soon as possible, a phone call, an email (if the instructor checks it frequently), or a face-to-face contact may be necessary. Check your syllabus for office hours and policies.
- Be sure to ask your instructor if this is a good time to talk to him/her. Typically the busier people are, the less receptive to your needs they will be. Also, waiting until the last possible minute to approach your instructor is not advisable, like after class, when there could be a line of students ahead of you.
- One approach might be, "Instructor Van

Patten, I need to talk with you about _____ as soon as possible. When can I do that?" Try to meet during the instructor's office hours.

Step 3: Organize Your Ideas Before Meeting with Your Instructor – Arrive prepared with your list of questions, requests, or concerns. An organized list will ensure that you do not forget any of your points. You will also be less anxious if you are fully prepared.

- Have all of your questions listed on paper beforehand.
- Have paper and pen available. It is best to record all information provided from your instructor rather than rely later on your or his/her memory.
- If you have a question about class material, we strongly advise that you bring your text, class notes and syllabus with you.

Step 4: The Talk

- Know your instructor's last name and use it with his/her appropriate title (Dr. Ms, etc.). Do **not** assume an informal greeting unless the instructor has specifically stated that a more casual greeting is preferred. If you don't know how to call your instructor, ask politely before you start to ask questions.
- Be sure to arrive on time and be mindful of possible (and likely) time constraints.
- Don't hesitate in asking to meet again if you did not receive all the information you needed. For example, "Instructor Heart, I really appreciate you spending some time explaining to me what I did not understand from your lecture. I would like to meet with you again to follow-up with some questions regarding our next assignment".

- Remember to dress the part of a serious student. You will not help yourself by wearing a low cut top or by showing your underwear above baggy jeans. Dress appropriately and don't forget this is an important part of being taken seriously as a student and as a person! Look mature and professional. If you have a lot of facial piercing, you should consider removing them for the meeting; jewelry can be distracting.
- Practice makes perfect, the more you talk to your instructors, the more comfortable you will grow in your interactions with them.



Add Assertiveness to Your Approach

Do you have trouble speaking up? If so, you may need some assertiveness training. Self confidence is a very important part of attaining success as a student. Being assertive means communicating your needs, beliefs and opinions to your instructors in a direct, respectful, and honest manner. Therefore, it is important not to confuse assertiveness with aggression!

Like any other skill, assertiveness takes time to learn. To start:

- Respect the ideas, needs and feelings of your instructors and classmates. Accept that their viewpoints may be different to yours.