

Challenges and Boosts to Students' Academic Success

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Asked to select factors that have made it difficult to succeed in a class since starting college, about half of students say an instructor's teaching style didn't work for them. Same for overly difficult materials or exams, and for balancing schoolwork and other responsibilities.

Four in 10 students cite **unclear expectations** and, separately, mental health struggles as barriers to success.

As for what faculty actions might help them succeed academically, students appear to be seeking more flexibility. This is a potentially tough prospect for already time- and energy-strapped professors. It's also complicated by the science on executive function in college students. **Yet nearly six in 10 students say professors being more flexible about deadlines would help them succeed academically.** Five in 10 say professors being more open to experimenting with different teaching styles would help.

Some four in 10 students want professors to be more flexible regarding attendance, as well as for their professors to set clearer expectations. About one-third of students want professors to take more of an interest in getting to know them.

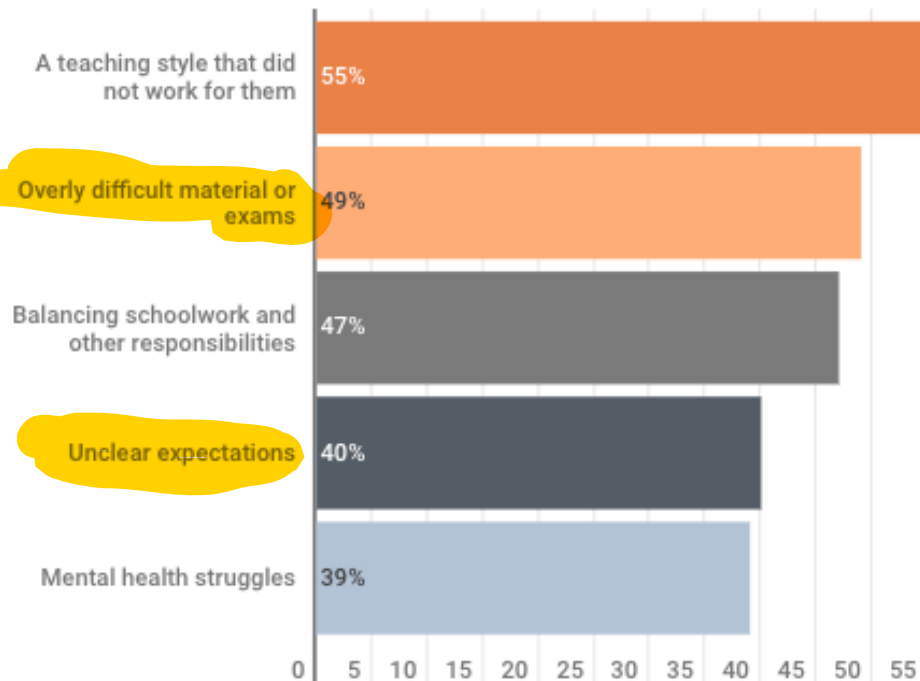
A note: Community college students and their four-year counterparts were equally likely to say that experimentation with different teaching styles would promote their academic success. But four-year students were significantly more likely than community college students to say they wanted more flexibility on deadlines and attendance, as well as clearer expectations and closer relationships with professors.

The Student Voice survey, conducted in collaboration with College Pulse, asked 3,004 two- and four-year students at 128 institutions a series of questions about academic life, with a focus on advising and otherwise navigating their academic paths, obtaining and engaging with course materials, and what impedes—and what might aid—their success.

Barriers and Potential Aids to Academic Success

What students say hurts—and would help—them in class

Top student responses for what has made it difficult to succeed in a class since starting college (by share of respondents)



Top faculty actions students say would help them succeed academically

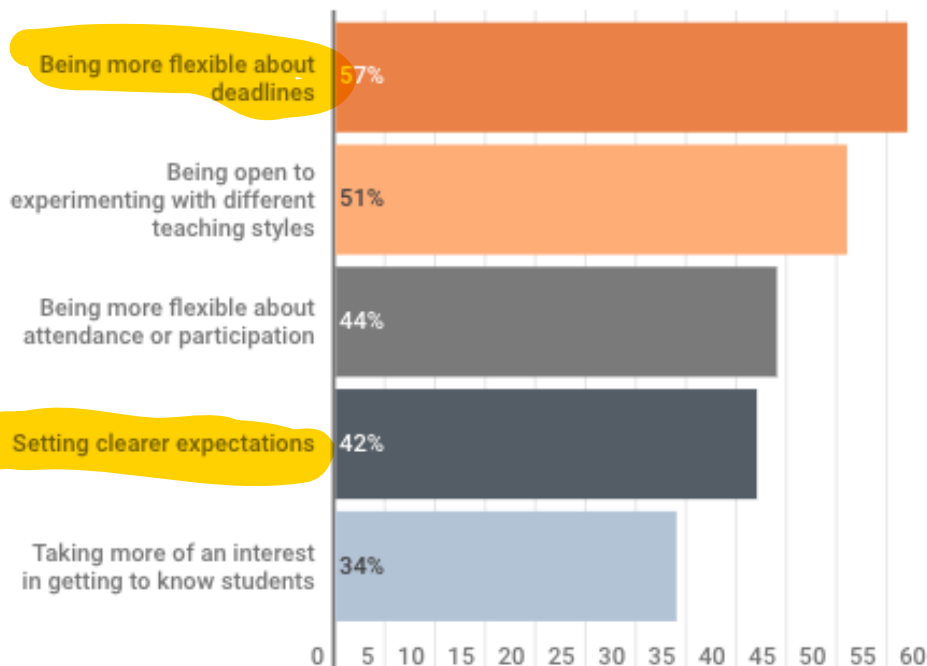


Image Description: Infographic titled “Barriers and Potential Aids to Academic Success: What students say hurts—and would help—they in class”

Horizontal bar chart labeled “Top student responses for what has made it difficult to succeed in a class since starting college (by share of respondents)”

Bar chart showing the percent of students who selected the following barriers to student success in class:

55 percent of respondents cited a teaching style that didn’t work for them.

49 percent reported overly difficult materials or exams.

47 percent reported balancing schoolwork and other responsibilities.

40 percent reported unclear expectations.

39 percent reported mental health struggles.

Another bar chart showing the percent of students who selected the following professor actions as helpful to them in class:

57 percent reported professors being more flexible about deadlines.

51 percent reported professors being open to experimenting with different teaching styles.

44 percent reported professors being more flexible about attendance.

42 percent reported professors setting expectations more clearly.

34 percent reported professors taking more of an interest in getting to know students.