Academic Attitude Essay, Research Paper

Academic Attitude

During the course of a student’s progression through academia, he must

learn that the teacher cannot think for him. It is essential for a student to

free his mind, allowing thought to flow. Instead of waiting for the answers to

be handed to him on a silver platter, he will rise to his full potential, above

to the meta level, and for himself, determine what the answer is. The student

must also become active in his learning. Therefore taking his academic potential

to the higher level. As well as achieving the higher level of thinking, the

student must actively pursue his learning. The way a student approaches his

education, weather he be in junior high or seeking his doctorate, is his

academic attitude.

The student should no longer be baby sat. She must think for herself

rather than be force fed information. To achieve this higher level of thinking,

as Roger Sale explains, takes discipline. Through discipline the students’ mind

becomes liberated, allowing her knowledge to become “active” (Sale 14).

Therefore, by making her knowledge active, the student is able travel past the

surface and explore the information in a deeper sense. In doing this, learning

does not become a habit. Rather, instead of memorizing material to perform well

on a test, or regurgitate it into a paper, the pupil synthesizes the information

presented, relating it to other things, hence, learning about the subject.

Information, then, is no longer strictly exchanged from teacher to student. It

allows the learner to open her mind, liberalizing it, allowing deeper thought

into the subject. Approaching learning with a free mind demonstrates quality

academic attitude.

It is commonly believed that education is based on the fact that a

student is to handed information by the teacher (Freire 23). It is as if the

teacher is saying,

I am an expert, and if I assume that the important fact about my

knowledge is that I am indeed an expert, my way of speaking to

you, who are not an expert but a beginning student, is always

going to be along the lines of: “I have what you want. Here is

what I know and you should learn” (Sale 13).

When the student is hand fed the information, what he has really done,

as stated by Paulo Freire, is just memorize the content that was presented to

him. Then the student “repeats these phrases without perceiving what (for

example) four times four really is” (Freire 23). This idea is known as the

“Banking Concept” (23) Someone, usually the teacher, makes a deposit of facts,

then, when the student needs these facts, withdrawals them (23). Through this,

the mind is in no way liberalized. In order to liberalize, one must step away

from deposit-making. In its place, act upon his own education. Go the extra

mile by asking questions and posing problems as they relate to their own

experiences. The student, as part of his academic attitude, needs to become

involved in his education.

There are many ways a student can become involved. Most importantly, a

student must become part of a “conversation” with the author while reading.

When the student reads as if having a conversation or discussion, she will be

able to raise questions or to challenge the authors claims. In the process of

questioning the author, the student will determine for herself the meaning of

the passage. Only when the student becomes involved and asks questions does

this informative dialogue evolve. It is equally important to pursue some sort

of conversation during class as well. Through this type of exchange, both the

teacher and student benefit. Not only does the student learn from the teacher,

but she teaches the teacher in return (Freire 27). Therefore, the student’s

level of thinking is elevated, her mind liberated, allowing her to synthesize

ideas and facts and arrive at a conclusion. It is up to the student to make

this happen by becoming active in her learning.

Sure one could go to the library and look up what experts have to say

about authors and their writings. He could find out what experts think about a

certain author, or what they think an essay means. Though, the student has not

really learned anything through this process. He needs to come up with the

meaning or answers himself. The student may argue that he could come up with

his idea, but it would be a lousy one. Though, an idea is an idea and is good if

the student derives it himself. The student would then argue that his idea is

not what the author meant. A strong reader, explained by Bartholomae and

Petrosky, would know that he is not searching for the author’s meaning. The

meaning is something a reader develops as he reads through the passage

(Bartholomae and Petrosky 41). The pupil takes the information presented to him

and, by relating key moments to personal experiences formulates his own meaning.

This type of “strong reading” requires the student to think freely. It is then

that he is able to dig past the surface and see the subject clearly.

Together, a student having an open, “liberalized” mind, and taking

responsibility for his academic progress leads to a good academic attitude. The

way the student approaches his learning greatly affects his academic attitude.

As a pupil, one must approach her material openly and relate to it, formulating

her own meaning. In order for the student to perform well, she must actively

participate in her learning. She should encourage herself to step beyond her

comfort level and ask questions. Become involved in discussion, whether this

discussion is with the author or the teacher. It is then that the student

becomes more knowledgeable. Only when these types of academic habits are

pursued will a student have an excellent academic attitude. A students academic

attitude, the way she approaches her education, needs to be open and active.