

Here, I focus on bad things that students tend to do.

### Cooperate!

Ask questions of your classmates, listen and respond to theirs. Form a study group. The more ways you look at something, the clearer it will become. *However...* Before meeting your classmates to work on the homework, it's better to struggle a bit with it on your own. (This insures that when the discussion starts, you won't coast, copy unthinkingly, or otherwise get left behind. Sometimes the deleterious effects of this does not become apparent until the exam.)

### Work smarter!

Don't struggle for hours, confused, without making progress. If you're not getting it and don't know how to so about getting it, get help.

On the other hand, learning takes effort, so you shouldn't do things that avoid hard work. For example, *these are bad*: Working homework problems with others before you've struggled with them a bit on your own. Constantly looking at the book/notes while studying (because during exams you will be looking at a blank piece of paper). Copying homework. Pretending to others and/or yourself that you understand well when you understand less than well.

### Get Interested!

For some folks this may sound hard. But an ounce of understanding is worth a pound of formulas. You only learn what you really want to learn.

If you're think you're a hotshot:

You should still do things the right way: sleep enough, study properly, etc. What worked in high school may not be good enough at IIT. One big difference is that for us *it's not enough to get answers*, but you must have a deep understanding of *why* the answers are correct, and you must be able to *explain*.

Trying to scrape by (with a "B", for example) is a bad strategy that rarely works as planned. Moreover, you want to learn stuff properly this semester to save you extra headaches during future semester.

Eventually one notices that real hotshots never try to scrape by, in anything that they attempt.

If you think that everyone else is a hotshot:

Maybe it's true, and maybe it isn't. Appearances can be deceiving. But let's say that it's true.

Life isn't fair, so you might have to work harder/smarter than others. You may have the feeling that "everyone" else has taken Calculus I before, that other sections of Calculus I have it easier, or even that other students are smarter than you. It doesn't matter. In the end, either you succeed or you don't. So, *no matter* what advantages or disadvantages you start out with, you need to do *enough* to succeed, which is whatever is required due to your particular situation. (By the way, there's a difference between recognizing your disadvantages in order to overcome them, and making your disadvantages an excuse for potential failure.)

You are all capable of success in my class if you do things the right way.

Get Feedback:

Talk to the instructor! In class and during office hours. Ask questions, answer questions, don't be afraid to guess. Correct quiz and test mistakes right away. Check homework answers after each session. Join a study group. Go to the **Academic Resource Center (ARC)**.

Take responsibility for your own fate. Do whatever the situation requires.

For example, if you do badly on a quiz, it doesn't help to merely resolve to study harder, or to do better on the next quiz. You must (1) understand your mistake on that material and similar material, practice doing similar problems, and verify that you're doing it correctly (check answers in the back of the book, or go to the ARC), and (2) consider whether your study/reading/sleeping/etc. habits need to be adjusted, and if so, make that change immediately. Good intentions are, by themselves, meaningless.

Another example. Say you want to take a class that is not in the catalog, or is rumored to be offered rather rarely. While you can't force faculty to run the course you want, you can almost certainly get what you want, if you: start early (at least one semester in advance), seek out fellow students with the same interest (and get their names), build up good will (by excelling in classes), be persistent (but polite) since faculty have many responsibilities besides your special request, etc.

Advice from older students:

Good stuff, but take it with a grain of salt. For example, even if Professor X really did do things as Student Y says, it's no guarantee that he will continue to do it that way.