Should There Be An Attendance Policy?

Most college students would agree that an attendance policy is unnecessary. Students will argue that they are paying for the class so they should not have to be told how many times they can miss class. Students will also argue that they should be treated like adults and should not have to worry about someone overseeing them and punishing them for not showing up to the class.

But on the other side, the professor sees it as giving the student several tries before giving the ultimatum to the student and giving up on him. An attendance policy also allows the professor to see who is truly passionate about school and who does not care if they are there or not. With an attendance policy, it helps the professor decide who he needs to focus his attention on and who not to. It shows him the students he can spend more time on and teach more to.

To a professor, an attendance policy is good to have; but in the eyes of a student, an attendance policy stunts the growth of their independence.

Using a policy to decide which students to give up on teaching is a good idea to a professor, but to the student, this shows that the professor could not care less about that student after the set number of days that he can miss. After seeing the professor’s strict policy, the student is less likely to look for that certain professor’s classes in following semesters and will not register for those classes. The student will find another professor that is offering that class during that semester or put it off until someone else is offering it.

Creating an attendance policy to use to see if a student is or is not passionate about the class is a good tool; yet, the student may be extremely passionate about the class but is unable to attend the class for various reasons. The student may be sick for weeks and unable to attend. He may have to go out of town and is unable to contact his professor before or while he is gone. The student may keep having another class end late and is unable to arrive at his next class before he would be counted absent for that day.

No matter how reluctant a student is about agreeing with an attendance policy, he must do it. There are two reasons a student is reluctant about the policy.

The student is reluctant because he is paying the professor to teach him so why should there be something that can make him lose the class but still have to pay for the whole semester worth of classes? The student argues that if he were to be dismissed from a class for attendance reasons he would want his money back. He paid for the whole semester worth of classes; he should be refunded the money that covers the percentage of class sessions that he is unable to attend because he has been dropped from the class.

Another argument against attendance policies is that the student’s maturity and independence is hindered by the policy. Having to follow the rules stated in the professor’s syllabus regarding attendance makes the student feel like he is no longer living on his own. He feels that he is still living at home and having to abide by his parents rules. It also makes the student feel as if he is still having to go to school even when he does not want to because he knows the repercussions of missing a maximum of six days throughout the whole semester. He feels as if he is not able to choose whether he can attend class that day or not. For example, during freshman orientation, the parents of all the students were told that the new students would be treated as adults. How is limiting the amount of classes a student can miss treating him as an adult?

By using an attendance policy, it makes the student feel bad that he wasted either his money, the government’s money, his parents’ money, or the school’s money. It may also cause the student to feel less mature and less independent than he actually is.