Discussion Questions for Sleigh and Ritzer (2001)

1. The authors identify a variety of direct benefits of consistent attendance. Of these, which do you believe is the single most beneficial aspect of regular attendance?
   a) What are some additional benefits of regular attendance that were not addressed by the authors?
2. The author’s argue that a full class has direct benefits for faculty. Do agree or disagree? How does presenting to a full class impact your lectures/activities vs. presenting to a poorly attended session?
3. Do you have an attendance policy? If so, what is it and is it mandated by your department? How do you track attendance in your classes and what (if anything) do you do with the attendance data you collect? How is your policy received by students? Do you adhere to your policy or are you flexible with the policy? If you don’t have an attendance policy, what are your thoughts on them and how do you address chronic absences?
   a) In your view, what are the pros and cons to having an attendance policy?
   b) In what ways do you believe your own attendance patterns as a college student have influenced your current philosophy on attendance?
4. It was noted that “using performance skills...captures students,” which may promote attendance. Do consider the role of a college professor akin to that of a performer? What data could be collected to determine whether a professor’s “performance skills” genuinely increase student attendance?
5. Did the authors make any recommendations or assumptions that you found either impractical, off-putting, or potentially unsubstantiated?
6. What do you believe are the greatest barriers to regular attendance for our students?
7. Based on the concrete suggestions Sleigh and Ritzer (2001) offer for improving student attendance, which (if any) strategies do you already use and how do you know whether or not they are effective?
   a) Which of the recommended strategies (policies, modeling, individual accountability, etc.) will you consider incorporating into your classes moving forward?

Additional Resources


Notes

Attendance can make learning person
- instructor can tell stories to illustrate concepts
- active learning → students learn in class, not just when attentive vs. attending

Faculty benefit when students attend
- help feed passion, not replaceable by textbook
- also benefit from human interaction

Attendance policy → students make it so student want to be there

Article - 4 year perspective about why students will class
- what about family obligations, work, transportation
- interesting to do a study @ CCRl about why they will class

Students like stories → dangle one at the end: "Remind me next week to tell you about..." → end class w/ a teaser (just like TV)

With attendance policy, how do you accommodate students who have emergencies?

What about labs?
- perhaps drop the lowest lab grade, including the one they miss
- are there portions they can do on their own or can you take pictures of some of the steps so students can get partial credit?

Treat students as adults who can be responsible for their own decisions