REASONS WHY STUDENTS FAIL

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My first semester of teaching has become a memorable part of my life. I was able to face different types of student in a private university. As someone new in the profession, it was not easy for me to adjust. Fortunately, there are people who helped me get through that difficult process.

One of the most painful part of that semester is when I allotted the entire day of the last day of the semester to talk to students who received a failing grade. Most of these students were not able to attend the class and pass the requirements needed to achieve the passing score of 75%.

Here are some of the reasons my previous students gave me when I asked them what happened (Please take note that I was teaching college students then):

1. “We have a family problem.” I am very considerate especially to those who already have their own families to feed. However, whatever problem their family is facing, it is still their duty to report to class. Having enrolled in the institution means that they are willing to do their part in the learning process. Of course, there were a few special needs that I really considered regarding this matter.

2. “There are classes that I was not able to attend to and activities that I was not able to do.” I can’t remember a moment of not following up on my students’ attendance. Also, when a person is absent in class, it is his responsibility to make up the activities that he was not able to accomplish, especially when he is excused. I had many students who does the same so most of the time, I do not believe in this kind of excuses.
3. “I did not know that there was a requirement to pass.” I think, the only reason for this excuse is carelessness and lack of interest. So most of the time, I don’t give considerations to statements like this. Ignorance is never an excuse in life.

4. “I already knew I would fail.” These are people who needs to think deeply about where they are going through in life as students. Simply accepting your fate that you would fail is definitely not good. They have to realize that quitting and giving up is not an option.

I understand that some of the reasons I heard that day was somehow excusable. However, more important than just letting the students have their desired score is having them learn important lessons in life. When they discover the world outside the school, they need to realize that every action brings consequences. I cannot just give them tres only because of pity. When they are on their own establishing their own lives, hopefully they will become more responsible of their actions and choices. I think, this is what education is all about- teaching them lessons of life. Sadly, the process, most of the time, is painful.

References:

1. Richard G. Scott (“To Learn and to Teach More Effectively,” in Brigham Young University 2007-2008 Speeches [2008]. 4-5)