How to be a Legitimate Student

Here are three suggestions for those who want to succeed in high school and in college:

1. Always do your own thinking

Don’t rely on other students’ thinking since it defeats the purpose of going to school.

Remembering facts is a side effect of learning how to think; memorization by itself is not the goal of an education.

1. Always do your own writing

It may be convenient to copy other peoples’ words, however not only is it dishonest but it prevents you from learning how to write (not to mention learning how to think for yourself).

Your writing is supposed to be a reflection of your thinking process and your command of the material, not a reflection of someone else’s knowledge and abilities. As a teacher, I cannot help students who do not represent themselves honestly.

1. Always do your own research

The internet is your friend. Learn how to find reliable information presented at a level you can understand, and also learn how to reformat that information in your own individual way (your own words). Don’t blindly copy information and hope for the best when trying to answer a question – be focused and only include that (in your own words) which pertains to what is being asked.

P.S. Occasionally I decide not to recommend a student for college, special programs, and scholarships. This is usually because such students have consistently misrepresented themselves and therefore I have little knowledge of their actual abilities (other than the capacity for fraud). If you want to impress me, be the best version of yourself.

P.P.S. Below is a letter from a former biology student who I wouldn’t let off the hook when he tried to take the easy way out:

Hello Dr. Wexler,   
I'm sending this message to thank you for everything you did to help me in high school.   
You were the one teacher to treat me with respect and corrected me when my arrogance took over.   
Since I left Bay View, I've gotten married, had two daughters and joined the Army. I'm also an engineering student at UWM but hopefully transferring to MSOE in the spring. Again I just wanted to thank you and hopefully I can hear from you soon.   
- L.J.