

3 Big Questions About Students at Sacramento State

What the students like?

1. Student Characteristics

- The **average age** is **27**. (Introductory courses and general ed courses often have a substantially lower average age.)
- 71% do not have dependents.
- 62% live less than 30 minutes from campus.
- 33% report they are first generation college students.
- About 40% consider themselves multi-ethnic and about a third spoke in a language other than English while they were growing up.
- Nearly 60% entered as transfers.
- 45% report that they attend day classes only.; 55% attend at night or both day and night.
- Most pay for their college education with part-time jobs and/or family assistance.
- About 72% are employed and **work an average of 25 hours** per week.
- The students surveyed **took an average of 13.5 units** in the semester
- Students spend an average of 6.8 hours per week on campus studying.

2. How Students Perceive the Learning Environment

- Most rate the instruction environment “Good.” However, they only rate class availability and convenience of class scheduling “Fair.” **They reserve their highest ratings for “Faculty preparation for class.”**
- The most important support service to students is “Parking.” However, “Parking” received the lowest quality rating.
- **Students rate “Faculty in my major” as the most important and best resource for academic advising.**
- **The most difficult coursework activities for students are preparing and delivering an oral presentation, writing a term paper and formulating a research question.**
- A majority is interested in working with major faculty on research, creative projects or other creative activities; however, only 18% have actually participated in these activities.

3. Students’ Perceptions of Obstacles to Their Education

- 73% have some concerns about how they will fund their education.
- **37% report that campus-related factors, including; course variety, instructors, and support services present the greatest obstacles in reaching their educational goals.**

Adapted from: http://www.oir.csus.edu/Reports/SNAPS/Fall2003/SNAPS_2003_Report_.pdf
(more current data available)

What are their learning styles?

By any descriptions of learning styles, our diverse students represent them all. You will find folks in your classes who are primarily **visual learners** (use and value diagrams, pictures, charts, etc.); **auditory learners** (who take few written notes, but listen closely—the drive some of us crazy); **read/write learners** (use and value written texts, outlines, notes on

class board, WebCT, etc.) and some **kinesthetic learners** (more in majors such as engineering, dance, physical therapy, etc.)

If you wish to know more, take a look at these resources:

Learning Styles Assessment

The Rogers Indicator of Multiple Intelligences. This is an interactive assessment of your intelligences. The theoretical ground is Howard Gardner's work.

NOTE: This test will not work with AOL's browser. Please use IE or Netscape version 4 or better. Also, JavaScript must be turned on in your browser's preferences (this is the default setting).

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/staff/b/x/bxb11/MI/MIQuiz.htm>

Index of Learning Styles Questionnaire

This particular version allows on-line scoring and immediate feedback for students.

<http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

VARK (Visual/Aural/Read-Write/Kinesthetic) Questionnaire

Learn about how you learn using this brief questionnaire. This questionnaire aims to find out something about your preferences for the way you work with information. You will have a preferred learning style and one part of that learning style is your preference for the intake and output of ideas and information. How you learn has an impact on how you teach.

<http://www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp>

What strategies do I use?

Planning a variety of approaches in class-**lecture, discussion, activity, demonstration, etc.** and, *where possible*, having *alternative assignments* which allow students to pitch to their preferred learning style can help meet all students' needs. *Redundant information sources* will assist students with learning or physical disabilities as well as the regular students. Working through a variety of approaches to include everyone's learning style and cognitive and physical disabilities is known as **universal design**.

The university is supportive of this approach. Look for workshops on the topic throughout the year. Scholarship of teaching projects related to your application of existing strategies or development of new strategies is also supported generally by the university. Check with your department about its degree of support for such research.

Feel free to pick up **the Universal Design Resource Guide** in CTL (LIB 4026)

You can excellent compendium of teaching tips at:

<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm>