

Table 6. Behavioral dimensions of grades and characteristics of outstanding and average students (modified from Williams, 1993).

Behavioral Dimension	“A” or Outstanding Student	“C” or Average Student
1. Attendance (commitment)	Nearly perfect attendance; rare excused absences except for other scheduled conflicts; make prior arrangements for missed content	Sometimes comes to class late; occasional absences from class are rarely excused; frequently puts other priorities ahead of course
2. Preparation	Well-prepared; readings and assignments completed before class with great attention to detail; rarely misses deadlines; retains information from the course and makes connections with past learning	Readings and assignments completed in a timely, but perfunctory manner with little attention to detail or further contemplation; work often appears to be “draft” quality
3. Curiosity	Has a motivating purpose; inquisitive; asks thoughtful questions and is an active participant in classroom discussions; makes the extra effort to learn more and connect with other aspects of education or life	Uninterested in subject material and class; participates in class and projects without enthusiasm; exhibits only modest interest in subject matter
4. Attitude (dedication)	Has a winning attitude and shows responsibility, motivation and determination to succeed; enjoys and values learning; listens to feedback and acts on it	Rarely does more than required; Seldom shows initiative; defensive about feedback and unwilling to accept responsibility; perceive themselves as victims
5. Talent (ability)	Possesses special talents such as exceptional intelligence, unusual creativity, or outstanding commitment that are evident to the instructor	Can have greatly varying natural talent; some students are quite talented, but lack organization or motivation; others are motivated, but lack special aptitude
6. Retention	Learns concepts rather than memorizes details so better able to connect past learning with present material	Tries to memorize facts at the last minute rather than learn concepts; makes few conscious efforts to connect new learning with past knowledge
7. Effort (time commitment)	Reads, studies, and thinks about course subject on a regular basis; begins assignments and projects well before deadlines; often willing to devote extra time and effort when needed; attention to detail; seeks out instructor outside of class	Does not develop a regular system for studying and doing assignments; frequently begins readings and assignments at the last minute; rarely willing to devote time necessary to develop deeper understanding
8. Communication Skills	Speaks confidently and writes well; presentations and documents are well-conceived, well-prepared, and informative	Presentations and written work lack organization and clarity; papers are generally draft quality requiring extensive re-writing to be effective; quality of content limited by poor communication skills
9. Results (performance)	Exams and papers are always of the highest quality (among the highest in a class); contributions in the classroom are significant and insightful; work demonstrates critical thinking	Products are mediocre or inconsistent in quality; writing and speaking indicates only a cursory understanding rather than a mastery of material