

# The faces of challenge

Business



Often times, the realities of something are not well reflected in how they are officially presented or recorded. Sometimes this is due to shady behind-the-scenes scheming and plotting to make something appear different than it really is; sometimes, it's because a misleading official description is beneficial to all involved parties, but most of the time, it can be attributed to those in charge not really being in touch with what's happening in the institutions they control. This is not necessarily their fault or even a problem; sometimes, the official knowledge of some entity does not truly matter.

This phenomenon of not understanding an institution until it has been experienced is especially ever-present in the courses taken in high school. It is incredibly hard to know which courses are actually difficult, except by talking to someone who has personally taken that class. Labels like "honors" or "Advanced Placement" attempt to denote the difficulty of a class, but these are often ineffective because even the same exact curriculum can differ in difficulty from teacher to teacher, as well as being significantly dependant on the abilities and preferences of the student taking that course. When trying to decide what kinds of difficulties will present themselves while trying to decide which classes to take based on official reports, teacher's attempts to promote the class, and anecdotes from other students, it is important to understand where difficulty comes from and what forms it takes. Classes can generally be sorted into one of three categories (the lines between them can be somewhat fuzzy, but they are still helpful for understanding their difficulty) - low difficulty classes, high-difficulty classes from workload, and high difficulty classes from content.

Low difficulty classes are, as with any difficulty level, dependant upon the skills and inherent abilities of the students, but usually share several key characteristics. The most obvious of these is easily understood content - content that, for whatever reason, makes intrinsic sense to those trying to learn it. This can be due to a student being particularly skilled in an area, the content simply being not very complicated, or an extremely talented teacher who makes even relatively complex material accessible. The actual difficulty is not the only factor, however, that makes these classes relatively easy. One is the workload imposed by the class - a lighter workload makes a class easier, simply by requiring less effort to complete.

Usually, this is not really connected to the actual difficulty of the content in any way, and is mostly a function of teacher decisions about how much classwork and/or homework is needed to properly understand the subject. With low difficulty classes, this can either reflect a lenient teacher or easily understood content that doesn't require much work to learn. Low-difficulty classes can therefore be further divided into appropriately low difficulty and inappropriately low-difficulty; a class may truly have easy content, or it may be made artificially simple, to the detriment of the students. Low-difficulty classes, are, of course, not the only courses present in education. There are also far more difficult classes (and those in the middle), with their difficulty sourcing from the same areas that caused the low-difficulty classes to be as they are.

One type of these is high-difficulty classes from workload. This is the polar opposite of classes that both offer little in the way of difficulty and the way of work. These classes may not truly have hard-to-understand content or

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advanced concepts, but are made into challenges by the sheer amount and length of assignments. This can be absolutely any sort of assignment - extensive essays, long readings, requirements of extremely detailed notes, mountains of math problems, or even, for some reason, word searches in foreign languages. The large amount of assignments given in these classes are not necessarily superfluous - sometimes, extensive essays are needed to prepare for a challenging AP exam, or mountains of math problems are truly required to understand just what is going on with arc length.

It is just as possible, however, that these classes are essentially giving work just for the purpose of giving work. These classes are often extremely frustrating to students, as they must expend a good deal of effort on something that ultimately has no purpose other than to fill up space in the grade book. Sometimes coexisting with the high-workload classes are those whose difficulty derives from the actual content itself. Whether a class falls into this category actually depends significantly on that student's personal skills and tastes, although math and science classes more often fall into this category, largely because it is easier to assess understanding of those topics and therefore harder to fake knowledge. This is not always the case, of course, and depending on the student any class could fit this category. These courses are difficult, obviously, and often frustrating and confusing, but this makes them valuable as well, giving not only scholarly information but experience in dealing with complicated, confusing, convoluted issues and figuring out how to stick it out.

Somehow, these classes also tend to attract the best teachers, making them a best-worst whirlwind of positives and negatives. Understanding where the <https://assignbuster.com/the-faces-of-challenge/>

difficulty in school courses can be valuable for both educators and their students. Students can more easily rationalize and accept challenging classes if they know why they find them challenging. Educators, on the other hand, can strive to find ways to make the workload effectively match the difficulty and not be the only cause of it, while striving to find a way to make the class reasonably challenging in its content to as many varieties of their students. This way, classes have more educational value without necessarily being that much more time consuming (either to take or to grade) and so better the lives of those involved more than they did before.