

12 Cognitive Disorders in Academics

Some students inadvertently acquire habits that distort the way they think about academics, see academics, or their potential for academic success. The results of these academic cognitive distortions or thinking patterns that limit college success are low self-esteem, poor self-confidence, loss of direction, and academic performance below potential. The good news is that these distortions can be replaced and along the resulting changes in the way students feel about and perform in college.

Number	Cognitive Distortion	Explanation
1	Catastrophize or Minimize	Exaggerate importance of your mistakes or imperfections, do these to others, or minimize your academic achievements, good qualities, or those of others.
2	Jump to Conclusions	Interpret events negatively even if there's no support for your conclusion.
3	All-or-Nothing Thinking	See things in absolute categories. For example, if your grades aren't perfect, you believe you are a total failure.
4	Mental Filter	Select a single negative detail and dwell on it so exclusively that it colors your whole vision of reality like one drop of ink colors a whole glass of water.
5	Mind Reading	Assume that people are reacting negatively to you.
6	Emotional Reasoning	Assume that your emotions necessarily reflect reality. An example is, "I feel like an idiot therefore I must be one."
7	Disqualify the Positive	Ignore your positive accomplishments and you choose negative beliefs that blind you to your successes.
8	Fortune Telling	Anticipate that things will turn out badly, convince yourself that the prediction is fact, and act accordingly.
9	Labeling	Involves emotionally loaded language. Instead of trying to fix an error, you attach a negative label to yourself such as, "I am a rotten student." When other students annoy you, you attach a negative label such as, "What a total creep."
10	Overgeneralization	View a single negative event as a predictable pattern of future, never-ending, negative events.
11	Personalization	See yourself as causing a negative outcome even when you are not responsible.
12	"Should" Statements	Try to motivate yourself with "should", "shouldn't", "ought to", and "need to" statements. The emotional consequence is ineffectiveness and guilt. You apply your "shoulds" to other students and when unmet, you feel resentment.

Meet with a learning skills or campus counselor to learn how to change any of your cognitive distortions!