

The archetypical student in biomedical engineering is one who has not fully appreciated any given topic in high school, or has not favored one, but still wants to have an engineering major declared immediately. Biology is an expansive topic that seems too daunting or uninteresting by itself, and they have only had some introductory high school classes to reveal that world so far. The engineering appeal exists more numerous job possibilities and prestige at the point of graduation.

The archetypical sophomore seems to be utterly unaware of what they will be when they grow up, but are nonetheless pleased that they are enrolled in, at least what their families and communities consider to be, a prestigious school for engineering and mostly believe that it will serve them well eventually. It seems like the future is still too distant to be considering until near the end of the year, if at all, and even that is more along the lines of completing those tasks and events that are supposed to contribute to the future, not necessarily determine what that future is going to be. They have never encountered an employed biomedical engineer, and so do not know what else to expect. At best, they have seen people working in the medical field or the more traditional engineering fields and liked what they thought of those things.

For this student, it's the topics that are motivating, not the goal. The variety of skills and subjects learned is compelling on its own for now. The student does not have to master something so relentlessly and without chance to change focus. They want to see many different things and be good at a bit of it all. There's still a big difference between learning and getting through the class, though, and when confronted with disliked teaching they quickly change moods from "What can I get out of this class?" to "How can I get through this with an [X] grade without going crazy?"

If anything, an obscure technical skill lends bragging rights. The student wants to learn to be able to do something interesting so that they can say that they know how to do it. But they are still being crushed and overwhelmed by their required classes, and so will avoid anything that advertises lots of out-of-class work. At a certain point, health versus education battle because they can't get along, and this student is stuck in the middle. Earlier in the sophomore year it was easier to forego sleep and food in order to spend more time studying. Later in the year, their stamina is starting to wane and the desire for a reasonable amount of sleep becomes important.

The archetypical student has a blurry understanding of the difference, as this seems to be a rebranding of lecture and lab classes. They have no control over whatever they're made to do in each class, so find it irrelevant. When pushed, they will admit to seeing these as either solo or social classes. They know what the solo class is like and can deal with it, even if they aren't learning much. The social class carries with it the potential for a bad group where unequal effort is put forth, and so extra concerns beyond simply throwing hours at the assignments begin to manifest.