A Teaching Method that Boosts UNLV Student Retention

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The practice and the need it addresses

Transparent Instruction Boosts UNLV Retention
Nationally, underserved students are half as likely to graduate in 4 years as their white and Asian peers (US DoE 2014, Tough 2014, Ishitani 2006). UNLV proudly claims the most diverse undergraduate university population in the nation (US News 2017), including many first generation and low-income students. The majority of UNLV students fall into this underserved category, and our retention rates (re-enrollment rates after the 1st year) indicate that roughly ¼ of our 1st-year students do not re-enroll the subsequent year.

Higher Retention rates for UNLV students who receive transparent instruction

UNLV faculty boosted student success and retention by using this framework to discuss academic work with students. The Practice: UNLV Office of Decision Support

The Evidence this practice benefits UNLV Students

Higher “Success Predictors” for Students across the US
Transparent instruction boosts two important predictors of student success nationally, with significant gains for all students and greater gains for underserved students: confidence and sense of belonging (Winkelmes 2016).

The Resources and where to find them

Examples and Resources available from TILT Higher Ed are free and downloadable, including:
- Slides and videos
- Sample assignments from multiple disciplines
- Publications
- Templates for transparent assignment design
- Self-guided checklist for transparent assignment design
- Example of various ways to offer transparent instruction
- Survey tools and free confidential reports to measure the impact on your students
- Student handout to frame class conversations about academic work

The How other UNLV teachers might adopt this practice

Small Teaching Changes with Big Impact on Student Success
- Revise two existing assignments in a course to make them more transparent, using this Self-guided Checklist and this Framework for Discussion with Students
- Look at examples of transparent assignments across the disciplines: TILT Higher Ed Examples and Resources
- Apply transparent instruction to the syllabus
- Follow UNLV faculty examples for providing transparent instruction exams
- Rubrics for grading: Higher Retention rates for UNLV
- Make revisions to more than one assignment
- Offer multiple successful examples so students don’t cling to just one too closely
- Try any of a variety of transparent methods, beyond assignment design:
  - Invite students to participate in class planning, agenda construction
  - Gauge students’ understanding during class via peer work on questions that require students to apply concepts you’ve taught
  - Explicitly connect “how people learn” data with course activities when students struggle at difficult transition points
  - Engage students in applying the grading criteria that you’ll use on work
  - Debrief graded tests and assignments in class
  - Offer running commentary on class discussions, to indicate what modes of thought or disciplinary methods are in use

The Citations

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Examples and Resources

• Survey tools and free confidential reports to measure the impact on your students
• Example of various ways to offer transparency
• Self-guided checklist for transparent assignment design
• Templates for transparent assignment design
• Rubrics for grading
• Offer multiple successful examples so students don’t cling to just one too closely
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Citations