A Teaching Method that Boosts UNLV Student Retention

Celeste Calkins
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Mary-Ann Winkelmes
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, mary-ann.winkelmes@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp_expo
Part of the Higher Education and Teaching Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/btp_expo/3
A Teaching Method that Boosts UNLV Student Retention

Celeste Calkins, College of Education
Mary-Ann Winkelmes, Faculty Affairs and History Dept

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.

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

The Wrongs:
• How do we judge students?
• How do we provide feedback?
• How do we measure success?
• How do we grade?

The Rights:
• Spend more time providing feedback on what you’ll use on their work
• Apply concepts you’ve taught in the context of conversations about academic work
• Take challenging questions beyond the syllabus
• Engage students in applying the grading criteria
• Gauge students’ understanding during class via peer work on questions that require students to apply concepts you’ve taught
• Debrief graded tests and assignments in class
• Offer running commentary on class discussions
• Offer multiple successful examples so students don’t cling to just one too closely
• Revise two existing assignments in a course to make them more transparent, using this Self-guided Checklist and this Framework for Discussion with Students
• 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 their 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

Examples and Resources
• 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 their 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

Higher Retention rates for UNLV students who receive transparent instruction

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 et al. 2016).

Examples and Resources

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 et al. 2016).

Examples and Resources

Small Teaching Changes with Big Impact on Student Success

Citations


