

Teaching Tip Tuesday

What Your Students Don't Know Can Hurt Them

Instructors often take for granted that students understand certain things about college in general and UWSP in specific. However, many of our students, especially first generation students, may lack the assumed knowledge. This can lead students to misunderstand instructor goals, and to miss opportunities. Taking time to clarify some of the following with your students can improve their overall educational outcomes.

Canvas

Faculty often assume that students know how to navigate the LMS. In truth, there is no mandatory Canvas training for incoming students. Although both TLC and Canvas offer training, students may not have made use of it. Be sure to provide either a quick navigation tutorial, or links to resources for students to learn how to use the LMS.

How to take notes and study

The notetaking and study skills required to successfully complete high school pale in comparison to those required for effective college performance. However, most students receive no formal guidance on how to take effective notes or to study anything beyond the rote memorization of flash cards. It is important to connect students with the TLC where they can learn more effective strategies.

Tutoring is not just for struggling students

Students assume that tutoring is for students who are failing. Helping them to understand that the TLC can teach them better learning skills, and provide a more structured pattern for study, even if they are not failing your class, will help them improve performance.

Office Hours

Many students assume that faculty office hours are the only hours that you are in your office working. It is not apparent to them that office hours are open for drop-ins, that they can come to the office hours to build relationships with faculty, to receive clarification or help about the course, and to discuss course material that interest them. You may avoid confusion by calling them “**Student Hours.**” Be sure to let students know how and when to make use of office hours.

C's make degrees, but they don't get you letters

Students often think that compliance with the minimum requirements for a course is all they need to move forward to graduate/professional school or to a job. Many do not know that they need professional recommendations for many further opportunities, and those are not forthcoming for mediocre, unmemorable students. Being engaged, enthusiastic, interested, exceling beyond one's peers, and taking the time to build professional relationships with faculty are important to opening doors to further achievement.

The goal is to gain knowledge, skills, and dispositions

Students often fail to apprehend that the goal of study is to learn, and that their learning is evaluated using exams. Instead, they tend to view the exams as the goal, meaning they don't focus on long-term retention of knowledge.