



Practical Tips to Support Student Success

From This  To This

Syllabus

**1 “Office Hours”**

Students may be under the impression that these are the hours you work in your office and are to not be disturbed. Or students view going to the office as a negative they're-in-trouble kind of way.

**“Student Hours”**

Highlights that the time is meant for them! Can be improved further by taking time to explain reasons they should come to Student Hours.

**2 “There are resources available to support you.”**

Can leave students unsure of what is actually available, or send the messaging that they should already know about the resources.

**An explicit list of resources**

By providing an explicit list of resources and how that resource may directly benefit them takes out the guess work out for the students. It may even illuminate resources they were unaware existed.

**3 A list of “Don’t do” this regarding cheating or studying**

Students may read this list and be unclear on what they should be doing or are allowed to do.

**A list of “Do” try this**

A clear list of do this can provide students with a transparent list of ways to be successful in the class. It can also provide students with a clear set of expectations of what they will do in class.

**4 “Some content in the class covers sensitive topics and may be triggering.”**

Students may not feel that they have the option to reach out to you to discuss the triggering nature of the content. Students may feel that they just have to face the content as is.

**“We’re going to be covering some sensitive topics soon. Please email me if you have concerns and we will work together to find alternatives.”**

By explicitly inviting students to reach out to you if they find content triggering shows that you care and want to work with the student.



## From This To This

Content

**5** “Don’t worry, you’ll get it if you keep trying.”

This can accidentally send the message that we believe the students are not trying or working hard enough. We are also then relating success to effort only.

**“I see you are putting in the effort; let’s talk about the strategies you are using”**

Acknowledges the work and effort they are doing as well as acknowledges that it may be time to try a different strategy for learning since the current one is not the right tool for right now.

**6** “If you find this material confusing or challenging ...”

Students may feel embarrassed or that they are the only one who finds the material confusing and resist using the resource.

**“I know this material is challenging and so I have this additional resource focused on this material”**

Can level the field for students and help them recognize that this material is challenging and its not just them.

**7** “Do you have any questions?”

This can feel like a closed ended “Yes I have questions” or “No I don’t have any”, rather than an invitation to ask questions.

**“What questions do you have?”**

We are intentionally highlighting that we are expecting them to have questions and are then inviting them to ask.

**8** In response to a student answer, “No”, “That’s not right”, or “Yea not quite”

Students can perceive this as evidence that they should not try to participate again. It can come across as you are only looking for correct answers rather than student thinking.

**“Thank you for sharing. I hear you saying [rephrase their thought]. Tell me more about that.”**

By thanking students for their participation, we are showing that we value student voice. Through rephrasing what we heard, we show that we are listening. By asking a follow-up question or inviting them to tell us more, we are intentionally looking for student thinking and not just correct answers.

Questions