8 Teaching Practices that Support Student Success

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Best Practice Tip #1:
Emphasize and reward student attendance to class.

Implementation suggestions:

- Use location-based check-in games such as FourSquare to take attendance in large lecture courses. Or, TopHat also offers a unique code students input for each class. (And yes, students can quickly text it to absent friends.)
- Give a short **weekly quiz** based on last week’s lecture material.
- Offer a **credit-only exercise** that must be turned in during class time.
- **Award daily points** for weighing in electronically during class (e.g., iClicker).
- Give each student a **single index card** at the start of class. At the end of class, students respond to a simple opinion question and turn in their cards. (Best for small classes or large lectures with a TA)
Best Practice Tip #2:
Every 10–15 minutes of class, solicit student input.

Implementation suggestions:

- **Pair up students** to talk about the day’s topic and then report to the group.
- Use a **polling app** (such as Poll Everywhere) on student smartphones to get quick input.
- Put students in small groups to **solve a problem** of any size and randomly ask representatives from various groups to write their solutions on the white board.
- Ask students to **free write** about a topic for 2 minutes, then follow up by asking what questions emerged from their writing.
- In a large lecture, use the classlist to **randomly call upon** students. Students can say “pass” if they opt not to respond in that setting.
Best Practice Tip #3:
Provide prompt feedback.

Implementation suggestions:

- Create **rubrics** that provide input on a specific area each week. Tell students ahead of time which area you are focusing on.
- Offer shorter and more frequent **assessments**.
- Provide up-to-date **grades** via eLearning.
- **Demonstrate** how to improve on a task or assignment that many students find challenging by using anonymous examples of student work.
- Structure assignments to allow for **revisions** after initial grading.
Best Practice Tip #4: Respect diverse talents and ways of knowing.

Implementation suggestions:

Ask students to:
- **Demonstrate** a technique for one another.
- **Draw** a concept map of an idea.
- **Storyboard** an idea by drawing sequential images.
- **Take photos** that illustrate principles (e.g. A biological principle such as photosynthesis, a chemical reaction such as steam, a social norm such as personal space).
- **Create** an advertisement for a theory or concept.
- **Write** song lyrics (a rap, a ballad, a pop tune) about a topic.
- **Role play** in class the various stakeholders in an issue.
Best Practice Tip #5:
Encourage cooperation among students.

Implementation suggestions:

- Have students use **Twitter** to file brief summaries of key lecture points. A common hashtag (#JRN3100) allows easy reference.
- Create **study groups** each semester that students can use as needed.
- Ask students to **explain course material to peers**. For example, assign each student a particular portion of a chapter to present to their classmates.
- Form **teams** for course projects, assignments or test review.
- Ask students to work together to **solve a problem** in a limited amount of time.
Best Practice Tip #6:
Frequently solicit feedback from students to gauge learning.

Implementation suggestions:

- Distribute **index cards** and ask students to write the main point of a textbook paragraph/page/chapter or in-class video or lecture.
- Require note-taking and collect **random students’ class notes** each week for credit.
- Offer **online discussion questions** about material taught in the past class.
- Create a **class blog** on which students post questions, and answer one another’s questions.
- Give **short-answer questions** during class about specific concepts and ask students to turn in their answers; a random check of 20% of the responses helps instructors know where students stand in their learning.
Best Practice Tip #7:

Emphasize inclusion.

Implementation suggestions:

- Consistently offer examples that feature **diverse perspectives** (religious, ethnic/racial, gender/sexual orientation, political, economic) in course discussions or assignments.
- Ask students to pair up with someone who **doesn’t look like themselves, or whom they haven’t met yet**.
- Examine issues from the perspective of **all stakeholders**, particularly underrepresented or minority perspectives.
- Connect learning to **societal issues** or problems.
- Invite speakers to class that provide **alternative viewpoints**.
Best Practice Tip #8:
Refer struggling students to support services.

Implementation suggestions:

- Use the BroncosFirst directory of student services to provide support based on a particular student’s needs.
- File the First Work report so academically struggling students receive personalized attention from support offices.
- Work with the Office of Disability Services when students have a documented learning disability.
- Submit a Student Concern Form to alert student services that a student needs outreach.
- File a Student Not Attending form to provide the opportunity for support staff to intervene with a student.
Dear Colleagues,

This is the first in a series of messages about simple things you can do to help WMU students succeed.

A significant number of you participated last fall in a Broncos FIRST survey on student success - thank you! Those findings are creating an important roadmap for ways we can work to improve graduation rates for students from low-income backgrounds.

Emails like this one from BroncosFIRST provide specific and simple actions you can do to support students’ success at WMU. Keep your eye out for future emails from us!

1. Put the course textbook on reserve at Waldo or other branch libraries. Check to see if your textbook is already on reserve at the Libraries by looking for the title in Library Search.

2. Scan early assigned readings and post them on Elearning. Or, ask the WMU Libraries Reserves service to scan the assigned readings; the process to do this begins here.

3. Tell students about WMU's short-term loan program, which will cover the purchase of books for eligible students. Students often don't know this help even exists. Click here for more information on those loans.
For additional information, to provide comments or to ask questions, please contact us:

https://wmich.edu/changeresearch/contact

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