

The Studio sees instructor clarity as a contributing factor to student retention. Research supports that clarity is a facet of solid college teaching (Hativa, 2001). In their text *Clarity for Learning: Five Essential Practices That Empower Students and Teachers*, Almarode and Vandas (2018) wrote, “Clarity in teaching and learning is the one thing that makes a significant impact on the growth in learning for students in any classroom ...” (p. 4). These authors relied on Hattie’s (2009) understanding of *clarity*:

communicating the learning intentions and success criteria for the learning intentions so that students can identify where they are going in their learning, how they are progressing, and where they will go next, thus providing students enough clarity to own their own learning (Almarode & Vandas, 2018, pp. 4-5)

In their text *What Inclusive Instructors Do*, Addy et al. (2021) wrote,

One of the best ways to ensure that your course gives students from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to thrive is by incorporating in your course design and syllabus information for students that explains what, how, and why you are asking them to do certain things in certain ways. (p. 60)

Here are some ideas to consider when thinking about clarity:

1. Ask students to answer the following questions about an activity / assignment and then reflect:
 1. What am I learning?
 2. Why am I learning it?
 3. How will I know I have learned it?Your students’ responses to these questions can help you self-assess how clear you are being in your class.
2. TILT one of your assignments. TILTING an assignment involves articulating clearly to students the following elements:
 1. Purpose of the assignment (not just in your class but beyond your class)
 2. Tasks they will undertake to be successful on the assignment
 3. Criteria for success (e.g., checklist or rubric)
3. Provide students models of previously-completed assignments as they embark on particular assignments so that they have a framework before they begin.
4. Think about your assignments from the perspective of a student instead of a content expert. To help with this, send out your assignment sequence to your whole class or to a select few students in order to gain information on what type of information they would like as they start the assignment. Students are generally honest and this previewing time not only shows your students that you value their insight but also helps you revise your assignment sequence before you officially publish it.
5. Be as direct and explicit as possible – with both your oral and written directions. Avoid superfluous details that could be confusing for your students. Consider recording yourself giving directions or explaining an assignment so that you can reflect on this practice (Szoke, 2024).

We invite you to check out Almarode and Vandas’ (2018) book *Clarity for Learning*, available online through High Library. Thank you to the High Library for adding this title!



Scan here to read Hativa's (2001) article.



Scan here to look at sample assignments from the TILT website.

