

II. Teaching Spaces (campus, classroom, Elearning)

"[They] may also feel more comfortable and secure sitting with their backs against a wall, so they may be inclined to sit in the back of the classroom. Be sensitive to this need for security and refrain from asking these students to move closer to the front of the room. –"Supporting Student Veterans: A Guide for Staff and Faculty" UW-La Crosse. http://www.uwlax.edu/uploadedFiles/Offices-Services/Veteran_Services/Staff%20and%20Faculty%20Handout.pdf)



Three top learning goals:

- 1) Apply a few quick ideas to hasten the ability of student veterans to acclimate and navigate a college campus;
- 2) Consider brief general differences between physical campus space and eLearning space from the point of view of transitioning student veterans;
- 3) Learn platform-agnostic tips and techniques, which can be applied quickly to almost any subject matter taught online, to better connect with student veterans

ABSTRACT:

A very brief overview of differences and observations related to student veterans on campus' physical space (campus-at-large, classrooms) and virtual learning (eLearning).

BRIEFINGS:

An online class or a physical class? Does it make a difference to a student veteran? How does each affect the faculty's ability to teach to student veterans?

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No Samples scenario

TIPS:

Faculty TIP 1): Quick orienteering for intro type classes with many new freshmen: mention campus layout maps, or point out where to find campus layout maps online

Point out the location of various essential services used by your class (instructor offices for office hours, quiet study spaces on campus, computer lab, student lounge, library, financial aid, student veterans services office, instructor offices, counseling, etc). Even if a 'scavenger hunt' type activity was done in a veteran student orientation, it's still a good idea to start with an orienteering.

Faculty TIP 2): LOCATION SEATING:

Many prefer the back of the room if there's a wall and no window there, to be able to survey the room. A student veteran with a service animal may have specific needs regarding seating. Can become an issue if a student veteran is hard of hearing or tired from work or inability to sleep well at night (common) and using the back as a place to nod off (evening/afternoon classes or earlier than 8:30 am classes particularly have this last issue). Vision impaired student veterans, those with mobility access needs, can also have needs that trump the veteran's desire to be seated where they can see exit and in/out of classroom. Typically use your judgement for seat preference or your campus Disability Student Services offices can help find the right seating answer. Location seating sometimes becomes an issue with student veterans when you have rotation seating (for groups etc) or circle layouts that expose a student veteran's back to a door.

Faculty TIP 3): E-Learning courses are often a big risk for student veterans new to college independent time management : 20"No one yelling in your face you have to do this" MF: use Remindit. "used to showing up and told what to do/out of fear. Also, **not every E-learner student vet is the same when it comes to tech skills:** Young Techies -can lose them when they see 'vanilla' powerpoint; short attention span. Those who have Poverty origins/using Military as escape may have very limited tech experience but will take class online because its status quo for other 'digital native' service people.

Faculty TIP 4): E-Learning: Use discussion groups to store model/sample assignments and ones with spot-what's-wrong type activities: Veterans are trained to know the norm and 'drilled' to be vigilant for deviations from that

norm. Model what is correct first (examples, steps, etc) and then have 'trainer' or 'Problem case' assignments> Use discussion groups, small groups, or whiteboards for video guided walkthroughs, 'grading' sample paper/problems, find the exception type assignments/discussions.

Faculty TIP 5): E-Learning: consider using checklists: As explained in 6: Classwork, Assignments, etc:

Checklists are better than wordy rubrics – converting a rubric into a checklist that has to be attached to an assignment/paper trades on the military procedure of running checklists before doing anything significant. LMS trick: Use LMS conditionals to 'require' the checklist [must open, submit checklist before can submit assignment] (tech if needed: <http://Any.Do>)

Faculty TIP 6): E-learning: consider closing every chapter, module, week, with a 1 minute voice or video clip

that summarizes content that must be accessed BEFORE releasing next assignment, quiz, next module, etc. IMAGES as discussion group PROMPTS. Involve other senses in lessons: sounds (audio feedback), visuals/visual literacy type assignments (theme by picture), fire off extra neurons vs TBI, memory, and vigilance

Faculty TIP 7): E-learning: Testing time/Finals/ suggest 'toys' for distractions for student veterans with

children: Suggest vets with children: have them buy and store a toy (a hot wheels car, a doll) or DVD. Have vet student give out that toy to kid(s) during FINALS or PAPER week to give that vet a few hrs to write or study 'guilt free'. Consider reaching out to Toys for Tots, community for donations. Though this works for in-class courses, distractions online are tougher. Tech tip: Game apps sites: shockwave.com (PC, etc)

Faculty TIP 8): E-learning: Working around 'accommodation' black out periods or alternative due dates:

accommodating a student vet with alternative scheduled due dates (black out periods when they will not have internet access if currently deployed and taking online courses; around upcoming VA appointments or reserve commitments or such, etc) Assign veteran student to a small group and release materials early around time of due date (I name the small group 'Released for student veteran/alternative due dates'. This will remind you instructor about alternative due dates and will branch course content for the alternative scheduled student without having to major modify your modules (and due/availability dates) in your LMS.