The Unwritten Rules:
Decode Your Assignments and Decipher What’s Expected of You

Did you know?

- Researchers in a national project demonstrated in a national study that transparency around academic assignments enhances students’ success — especially that of first-generation, low-income and underrepresented college students — at statistically significant levels (with a medium-to-large sized magnitude of effect for underserved students). [Winkelmes et al., Peer Review 2016]
- When faculty make the purpose, tasks and criteria of an academic assignment clear before students begin to work on it, students are more likely to experience greater academic success with that assignment, developing the knowledge, disposition, and skills necessary to succeed both at school and in life (in comparison to when students experience less clarity around purpose, tasks and criteria for their academic work). [Winkelmes et al., Peer Review 2016]
- For University of Nevada Las Vegas students, benefits also included a significantly higher rate of returning to college the following two years. [Gianoutsos and Winkelmes, PADE Proceedings 2016; Winkelmes et al, 2019, 2016].
- An inclusive learning environment benefits all students and offers more equitable learning opportunities for underserved students. Research on student learning links college students’ academic confidence and sense of belonging with higher GPAs, persistence and retention rates [Walton and Cohen, Science, 18 March, 2011].
- College students increased their test scores when supported by a system that advocated the belief that intelligence is not fixed but rather malleable. A year later, these students were 80% less likely to drop out of college [Aronson et al, Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38, 2 (2002)].

WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO:

Before you begin working on an assignment or class activity, ask the instructor to help you understand the following. (Bring this document to help frame the conversation.)

Purpose

- Skills you’ll practice by doing this assignment
- Content knowledge you’ll gain from doing this assignment
- How you can use these in your life beyond the context of this course, in and beyond college

Task

- What to do
- How to do it (Are there recommended steps? What roadblocks/mistakes should you avoid?)

Criteria

- Checklist (Are you on the right track? How to know you’re doing what’s expected?)
- Annotated examples of successful work
  (What’s good about these examples? Use the checklist to identify the successful parts.)

Math 181

For the given function

\[ f(x) = \frac{x^5}{3} - 3x^3 \]

Find and simplify the first derivative

Find and simplify the second derivative

Identify any critical points

Identify any inflection points

Make a rough sketch of the shape of the graph and label the critical points and inflection points.

Evaluate the problem:

- Identify any critical points
- Identify any inflection points
- Indicate where the function is increasing/decreasing,
- Conclude upward/downward (i.e., Make a sign diagram)

7. Show you the typed transcript and reflection paper to your instructor.

4. What questions will you have?

3. What advice has helped you learn about your major/career?

2. What did you learn from them that is most interesting?

1. Who did you select and why?

6. Write a 400-500 word reflection paper in which you address the following:

Prepare a typed transcript of the questions and answers using the audio/video recording (with the interviewee's permission)

Identify any critical points

Identify any inflection points

For the given function

\[ f(x) = \frac{x^5}{3} - 3x^3 \]

Write a 400-500 word reflection paper in which you address the following:

- When did you select?
- What did you learn from them that is most interesting?
- What this assignment helped you learn about your major/career?
- What questions do you still have?

Submit the typed transcript and reflection paper to your instructor.

Math 181

For the given function

\[ f(x) = \frac{x^5}{3} - 3x^3 \]

Find and simplify the first derivative

Find and simplify the second derivative

Identify any critical points

Identify any inflection points

Indicate where the function is increasing/decreasing,
- Conclude upward/downward (i.e., Make a sign diagram)

Make a rough sketch of the shape of the graph and label the critical points and inflection points (x value only)

Submit the typed transcript and reflection paper to your instructor.
This assignment will help you practice the following skills:

- Selecting, evaluating, and synthesizing evidence from primary and secondary sources
- Using evidence to support conclusions and arguments
- Writing a research paper
- Conducting research
- Preparing a final report
- Presenting a poster

**Issue: Issues facing professionals in a field with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:**

1. [List important content knowledge in this discipline]

**Skills:**

This assignment will help you to become familiar with the following skills:

- Writing a research paper
- Conducting research
- Preparing a final report
- Presenting a poster

**Purpose:** The purpose of this assignment is for you to make an informed decision about the profession you are considering.

Due dates:

- September 15 - Final report
- October 15 - Transcript of interviews
- November 1 - Report

**Criteria for success:** Please see the attached rubric.