Eleven Tips for Success at UWT

1. **Make a commitment.** Succeeding in a university program requires a serious commitment, both time and psychologically. Devote yourself to your schoolwork as much as your other obligations in your life. You should expect to spend 3 hours per week for each class credit you are taking. So, a full load of 15 units requires about 45 hours of class time and home study time. In reality, you should strive to keep studying until you understand the material. This may require you to spend more than 15 hours per week for a 5 unit class.

2. **Be realistic about how fast you can progress through the university.** Taking 15 credits and having a full-time (40 hours per week) job is a recipe for disaster. Think carefully about the time commitments you have in your life and adjust accordingly. Manage your time!

3. **Be an active participant in your education.** Don’t just show up to class, take tests, and receive a grade. Get the most out of your time at the university by participating in your education. Participate in class, ask questions, and challenge ideas and even the instructors. Read the book *before and after* lecture. Talk to other students or the instructor outside of class. Get involved with others in campus activities. Be passionate about everything you do.

4. **Be aware of how you are learning – seek the conditions under which you learn the best.** Some people's idea of studying is while playing video games, listening to the radio, and watching TV. Successful students are able to focus their attention to solve complicated problems. Effective studying requires quiet and concentration. Another way students can learn more effectively is by studying in groups and hearing other people's points of view.

5. **Take homework seriously.** The first (or second) answer you come up with is almost always wrong. Double-check your work. Understand the *reason* why your answer is correct or incorrect. Doing homework only because the instructor asked you to do so (or that you will get points for doing it) is essentially a waste of time.

6. **Go beyond the homework and book.** The textbook is just the beginning of your studies. Ask yourself why the questions asked in class are intellectually important. Notice the way in which your instructors and the book reason through a topic. Don’t be satisfied with just memorizing facts. Be critical: ask why things are the way they are and make judgments.

7. **Find out all you can about your major and career opportunities.** After taking a few courses, your view of your major will likely be different from what you thought it was. Not everyone who gets a computer science degree ends up working for Microsoft. Discover *for yourself* what about your major attracts you, what skills you have, and seek career opportunities that require them.

8. **Find out all you can about things other than your major.** The purpose of a university education is more than just getting a job after you graduate. Participate in university events that involve other students and faculty. Run for a student office. Take your non-major classes seriously. Talk to the other people in these classes; you will probably find their perspective on things to be eye-opening (and yours to them).

9. **Do not underestimate the importance of communication skills.** Knowing things is not enough. You need to be able to read, write, speak, and listen effectively.

10. **When you are stuck, seek help.** Everyone has a little trouble from time to time. If you are struggling academically, faculty, mentors, advisers, and fellow students are all here to provide support for you. Use the Library, the TLC, and the Counseling Center.

11. **Being at a university is an adventure – treat it like one.** You are taking a great risk by being at a university. What will you do with your life after school? Even though there is much uncertainty, no one ever got anywhere by sitting still. There will be times when you feel you are not making any progress or that the challenges of college seem insurmountable. Realize that anything worth achieving requires a positive attitude, a sense of adventure, and hard work. Then take the plunge!

By Donald Chinn (Associate Professor, Institute of Technology) and Ingrid Walker (Director of General Education)
Study Habits of Successful Students

Basic Study Habits
1. Attend class every day.
2. Read the textbook.
3. Do the assigned homework.
4. Pay attention in class.
5. Take the exams.

Prepare for Success
6. Read the introduction of the textbook before the course begins. Read the syllabus of the course before the course begins.
7. Read sections in the textbook before the lecture on those topics.
8. Read the homework assignment the day it is distributed to get an idea of what it is and how long it will take to complete it; start early on the assignment.

Engage the Material
9. Reread and understand sections in the textbook after the lecture on those topics.
10. Do problems other than the assigned work (typically two to three times as many as in the homework). Practice, practice, practice.
11. Talk to other students in the class about the material in the class; ask questions in class.
12. Talk to the instructor in office hours when having troubles in the course.

Practice Excellence
13. After completing your homework, let it sit for a while (a day) and then recheck your work.
14. Invent problems related to the material in the course – and then solve them.
15. Regularly talking to others in the class (or mentors) to discuss the material, solve problems, and check each other’s work.
16. Regularly meet with the instructor to discuss the material in the class, not just when in trouble.

More Habits of Effective Learners
17. Do outside reading and relate it to what you are learning in your classes.
18. Establish a “learning network” – a group of people you can talk to about classes.
19. Demand excellence of yourself: anything less than an A or B is unsatisfactory.
20. Demand excellence of others.

Homework Tips
1. On the day the assignment is distributed: read each problem or question on the homework and understand what the problems ask for.
2. On the day after the assignment is distributed: read and understand the parts of the textbook related to the problems. (Don’t just try to look for answers to the homework problems.)
3. Two days after the assignment is distributed: try solving the problems. Talk to others about the problems.
4. Write up complete solutions at least one day before the assignment is due.
5. A day after writing up your complete solutions, check your answers for errors.

Recommended Reading
Professors’ Guide to Getting Good Grades in College by Lynn F. Jacobs and Jeremy S. Hyman. 
First in the Family: Advice About College from First-Generation Students by Kathleen Cushman.