# Six Tips for Helping Students Take Advantage of Office Hours

1. I let students know in class and on the syllabus that I am also available by appointment. I'm not locked into the 5 hours listed on the schedule. Poll your students to see when they are most available and schedule an hour around those times. The key is to be flexible and willing to meet students at times that are convenient for them and you.
2. It may be the case that some students work and have schedule conflicts. In this case, schedule virtual hours so students do not have the added pressure of traveling to your office to meet.
3. One professor replaced the name "Office Hours" with "Student Hours" to signal to students that the time dedicated was for them (Supiano, 2023 p. 31). Another professor replaced "Office Hours" with the name "Let's Talk!" (Supiano, 2023, p. 33). He then went on to give students a reason to come to his office hours:

   > *"Why?": Introduce yourself, get to know me better, help me get to know you, develop or sharpen your study skills, go deeper with the material, get help with content or assignments or talk about ways to cope with college and life. Especially useful if you are curious about psych topics not covered in class or want more."*
4. I've made office hours mandatory during mid-term. In place of class, I met with students one-on-one to get a sense of students' perception of their strengths and opportunities for growth. It was also their time to give me feedback on what was working and what could be improved in the course. Students received points for showing up and for being prepared to discuss their progress in the class.
5. Some professors are sharing their social media handles as another way to connect with students outside of class (Supiano, 2023).
6. The institution I retired from had academic coaches who would send messages to students when they had been informed the student had missed a number of classes or was falling behind in work. This gave the student a neutral third party to talk to. These conversations often led students to connect with their instructors and work out any difficulties needed to pass the class.

Seeking out help requires risk and vulnerability. Therefore, trust should be established in class, and the student must feel safe reaching out. Rapport with students matters. That means getting to know students and allowing them to get to know you. Relationships are necessary if we want students to advocate for themselves and ask for help.

## Reference

Supiano, B. (2023, September 1). The missed opportunity of office hours: Meeting with a professor can help students learn, or even change their lives. So why don't more students do it? *The Chronicle of Higher Education.* p. 29-33.