






"Empowering Students For Academic Success"

2025 AVTE Conference

Presenter: Dr. Kimberly Focht, DVM

Why Student Success Matters in Veterinary Technician Education.

-  **Animal Welfare and Patient Safety** Well-trained veterinary technicians provide competent medical care, administer treatments safely, and monitor patients effectively, directly impacting animal health outcomes.
-  **Workforce Stability** Successful graduates help address critical staffing shortages in veterinary medicine while reducing costly turnover rates that plague understaffed clinics.
-  **Professional and Economic Viability** Student success strengthens the credibility of the veterinary technology profession and ensures graduates can achieve stable employment that justifies their educational investment.



Proven Strategies for Teaching, Retention and Personalized Engagement

Session Overview

Three Pillars of this session:

- Using Metacognitive Learning Strategies
- Early Alert Retention Tools
- Personalized 1:1 Student Support



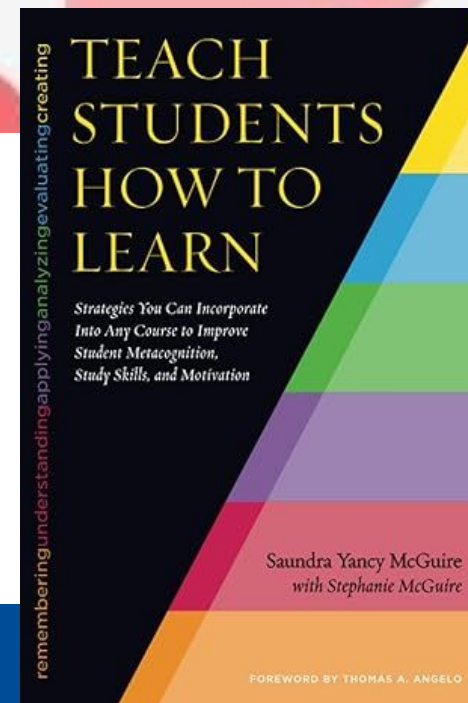
WE'RE ON A JOURNEY TOGETHER:

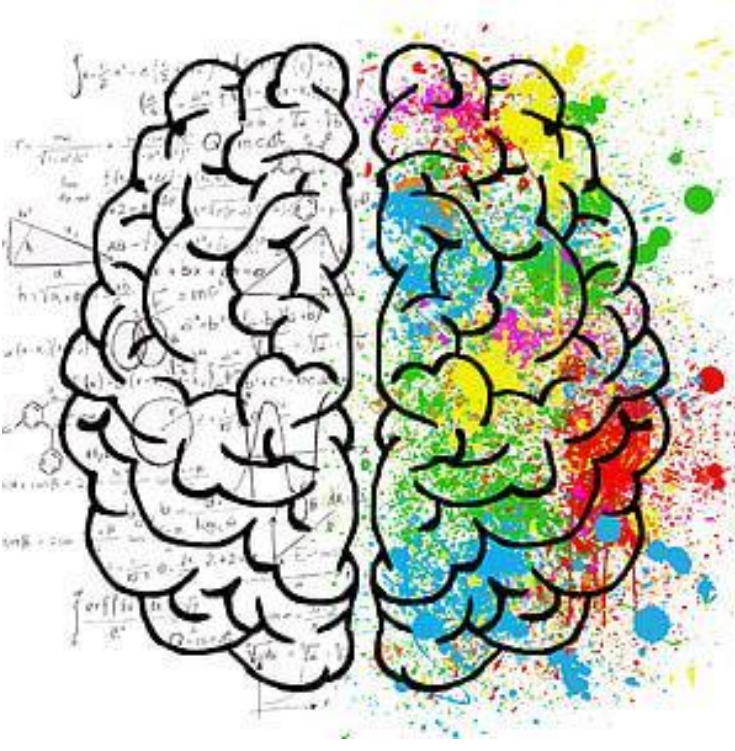
The Challenge in Vet Tech Education

The curriculum is fast-paced and demanding, requiring students to quickly adapt and stay engaged. With diverse student backgrounds and varying levels of preparedness, some programs experience high attrition rates, highlighting the need for a proactive, student-centered approach.

Metacognition Strategies

based on: **“Teach Students How to Learn: Strategies You Can Incorporate Into Any Course to Improve Student Metacognition, Study Skills, and Motivation”**
-Sandra McGuire





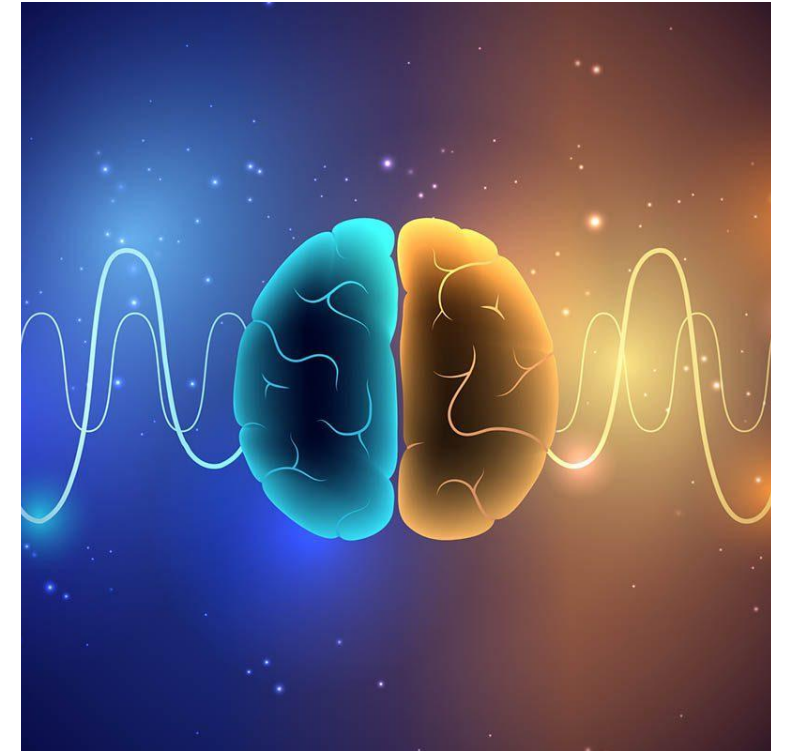
➤ Metacognition- The Game Changer

- Empowering students to think about their thinking
- Teaching *how* to learn vs *what* to learn



➤ Self-Regulated Learning

- The Study Cycle
- Retrieval Practice
- Time management



➤ Growth Mindset

- Intelligence is malleable
- Encourage:
 - effort/persistence
 - Learning from mistakes

Metacognition

Student Transformation through Metacognition:

- From passive to active learners
- Increased confidence and academic independence
- Real-world skills for clinical and professional success



Self-Questioning

What do I know?
What do I need to learn?
How will I know I've learned it?



Bloom's Taxonomy Awareness

Encourage higher-level thinking:

- Apply
- Analyze
- Evaluate
- Create



Elaboration & Concept Mapping

Connecting new ideas with existing knowledge

- Concept maps
- Be curious
- Comparison charts

Self-Regulate d Learning

DESCRIPTION

Self-Regulated Learning helps learners become independent, improves academic performance, and supports lifelong learning by promoting awareness and control over one's learning process.



> The Study Cycle

- Preview before class
- Attend Class and engage
- Review within 24 hours
- Study in focused sessions
- Self-assess regularly



> Retrieval Practice

What is it: Pulling information from memory
Why it works: Strengthens long-term retention
Tools: Flashcards, Practice Quizzes, Teaching others



> Time Management

Focus on spaced practice over cramming

- Weekly planner w/ study blocks
- Pomodoro Technique
- Eisenhower Technique

Growth Mindset

DESCRIPTION

A **growth mindset** is the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort, effective strategies, and persistence.

A growth mindset helps students become more motivated, resilient, and willing to engage deeply with learning—even when it's difficult. It promotes long-term academic success and a love for learning.



➤ Model a growth mindset

- Emphasize effort over innate ability
- Be willing to show your students how you learn from setbacks
- Self-assessment



➤ Encourage Challenges & Normalize mistakes

- Review exams/quizzes/assignments
 - What did I miss? Why?
- Give real world examples to apply knowledge
- Review assessment practices



➤ Foster Metacognition

Help students reflect on what strategies work and how they can improve

- Early alert systems
- 1:1 student check-ins



**Early Alert Tools can significantly
improve retention and student
success.**



➤ **Timely Intervention**

Identify struggling students early



➤ **Personalized Support**

Tailored responses based on each student's specific challenges



➤ **Improved Student Accountability**

Being seen and supported encourages accountability and motivates students to stay on track.

Early Alert Retention Tools

By fostering earlier connections between students and support resources, early alert systems create a safety net that boosts both retention and long-term academic success.



➤ Timely Interventions

- Proactive Risk Identifiers
 - Dropout Detective
- Faculty and Staff allies
- Student Resource referrals



➤ Personalized Support

Early intervention allows for the student to get personal support:

- academic resources
- counseling
- Life support (bus tickets, food resources, etc)



➤ Student Accountability

- Motivation to stay engaged
- Sense of belonging
- 1:1 check-ins

Student (15 total)	Risk Index	Trend	Last Not
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 37	↑ +13	about 2 mo
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 16	↑ +12	over 2 year
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 16	↑ +12	over 1 year
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 13	— +0	4 months a
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 9	— +0	over 1 year
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 4	— +0	
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 4	↓ -1	7 months ago
[REDACTED]	<div><div></div></div> 4	— +0	

Using Dropout Detective[©] Effectively:

- Monitor attendance, grades, engagement
- Collaborate with support staff for holistic intervention
- Track impact and adjust support strategies

➤

How it works: Flags at risk students based on LMS data

Why it matters:
Early interventions = Better outcomes



Maximizing 1:1 sessions with students

Personalized 1:1 sessions

Why they matter: Connection, context, and care

Making 1:1 Sessions Effective

- Be consistent and intentional
- Use Active Listening and open-ended questions
- Create a safe, judgement-free environment



> Academic Check-ins

- Dropout Detective
- Grades, Attendance
- Student's mindset
- Student Success Plans



> Personal goal-setting

- Study strategies
- Time management
- Personal reflection on progress



> Emotional support and referrals

- Coaching/mentoring vs Professor
- Encourage resiliency/perspective
- Refer to Student Support agencies

A series of black paw prints of varying sizes and orientations are scattered across the top and right side of the slide, creating a decorative trail.

Putting It All Together-

- **Start class with learning strategies mini-lessons**
- **Schedule 1:1's early in semester**
- **Use Early alert systems**

	(July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016)	(July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)	(July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)	(July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019)	(July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020)	(July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021)	(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)	(July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023)	(July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)	(July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025)
E = Enrollment (as of July 1)	32	38	35	31	17	22	14	16	20	14
NS = New Starts (July 1 to June 30)	22	24	24	14	24	18	24	24	18	16
RE = Re-entries (July 1 to June 30)	0	0	2	0	3	1	5	3	6	2
G = Graduates (July 1 to June 30)	10	10	15	18	10	15	9	13	25	13
EE = Ending Enrollment (as of June 30)	38	35	31	17	22	14	16	20	14	19
Retention %	88.89%	72.58%	75.41%	77.78%	72.73%	70.73%	58.14%	76.74%	88.64%	100.00%

VET210 Veterinary Nursing II		
Year	# students	Avg Grade
2019	17	2.35
2020	20	2.25
2021	12	2.92
2022	12	2.75
2023	25	3.12
2024	14	2.79

Real-World Application:

Metacognition Techniques Spring 2021

Dropout Detective Fall 2020

Personalized 1:1 sessions Fall 2021



VET150		
Year	#students	Average Grade
2019	23	3.13
2020	17	2.18
2021	23	2.57
2022	23	2.82
2023	16	2.75
2024	16	2.87

THANK YOU

Contact information:

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Resources:

“Teach Students How To Learn” Sandra McGuire

“Teach Yourself How to Learn” Sandra McGuire

YouTube Video: [Teach STEM Students HOW to Learn: Metacognition is the Key!](#)
[K. Patricia Cross Academy Techniques Archive](#)