Engage Your Students from Day One: Prepare for Your First Day of Teaching

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FIRST DAY OF CLASS?
THEY'RE PROBABLY ONLY GOING OVER THE SYLLABUS
GOAL:
Learn strategies for creating a safe, exciting, and focused first day of class that will get students engaged from the outset.
Students connecting with you

Nonverbal:
  • gesture, movement
  • physical environment
  • attire

Verbal
  • arrive early
  • share about yourself
  • address students by name
*Students connecting with each other*

Get them talking!

- introductions
- first day activities
Students
connecting with the course

Build excitement
  • first day activity on course content
  • share your enthusiasm

Give them ownership
  • course expectations
  • participation guidelines
Section Participation:

Participating in section involves attending each section and being attentive to the class discussion or activity. You should demonstrate your knowledge of the class discussion or activity. You should demonstrate your knowledge of the class readings by making thoughtful comments, as well as asking clarification questions about readings and concepts when necessary. Engaging in activities irrelevant to class or arriving late to class will result in point deductions from your grade. Not making a real attempt to complete tasks or failing to participating in the activities is unacceptable. (Psychology 000)
Whenever you have a question, please ask it! (...we are also well versed in a variety of subjects besides oceanography.) Learning in science is a very question-oriented process; discoveries and advancements in science are made through the process of asking questions and finding answers.

In introductory courses such as this one, it is also important that you develop a sense of how scientific problems are tackled, i.e., how to think “scientifically.” Most of the problems we tackle in class—and most scientific problems in general—involve the piecing together of different facts into a coherent, believable explanation of some phenomena.

In order to help you develop a knack for this, you will find that we often answer your questions with questions; a technique that is really annoying to some people, but much better for you in the long run. Such "question" responses are designed to help you try to approach the problem from a number of different angles—and will often prove to you that you really do know the answer! It is very easy to memorize a series of facts, but much more difficult, meaningful, and fun to really learn and apply them. (Oceanography Lab)
Classroom Contract
The following rules and conditions apply for all discussions and conversations that take place among members of this class, both in the classroom and in outside group work for this class:

• I will respect my fellow classmates, taking into consideration that everyone comes from diverse backgrounds and different levels of educational experience.
• I will be open-minded.
• I will be open to disagreement and difference of opinion while at the same time refrain from insulting my fellow classmates.
• I will be mindful of how I present myself to the class. I will not be aggressive, judgmental, or verbally attack anyone.
• I will engage in active listening when others in the class are speaking, which includes not interrupting, turning my cell phone off, and refraining from text messaging.
• I give myself and my classmates permission to change their minds about issues over the course of the term.
• I will actively participate in the class, which means I will come to class on time, read the materials assigned, and be prepared to discuss the materials.
• I will step up and make verbal contributions during class, and I will also step back and allow others to speak after I have had my turn.

Name_____________________________ Date________________________
(Introduction to Women's Studies)
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