

MAKE THE FIRST WEEK COUNT

Research and best practices tell us that faculty behavior during the first week of class, beginning with the first class meeting, sets the tone and expectations for the semester. By setting the bar high and making the first week count, we give our students the best opportunity for success.

ADMINISTRATIVE TOOLS

- Prepare and briefly present a complete class syllabus, including detailed information about assignments and due dates.
- Arrive early and start class on time.
- Structure and communicate your grading system in a way that makes it easy for students to keep track of their grades in the course throughout the semester.

CONTENT

- Include content on the first day – don't just hand out the syllabus.
- Perform a striking, memorable demonstration.
- Give an assignment on the first day to be collected at the next meeting.
- If the textbook is important, insist that students purchase it.
- Instead of telling your students what material the course will cover, tell them what they'll be able to do with the course content.
- Evaluate your students' previous knowledge. Ask what related courses they've taken, or give a non-credit test.

MOTIVATION

- Ask students to list things they know about the course and questions they have about course topics.
- Have students write down what they think the important issues or key concepts of the course are.
- Have students write goals for themselves.
- Communicate and enforce high standards for all students.

SUPPORT

- Provide feedback early in the course.
- Explain how to study for the kinds of tests you give. Give sample test questions and answers.
- Make an effort to learn students' names, even in large classes through taking photos, using nametags, etc.
- Provide students with multiple ways to contact you (phone, email, office hours, etc.), and set appropriate boundaries.
- Collect students' contact information. Consider dividing students into support groups and distributing student email information to group members.
- Utilize web services such as eCampus for outside class support.
- Announce office hours frequently and hold them without fail.

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