Launching a Successful Semester: Tips for the First Day of Class

Center for Teaching Excellence

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Icebreaker

- Pair up with someone you’ve never met before.
- Interview your partner.
  - Discover 1-2 interesting things about him or her, and 1 thing he or she hopes to take away from this session.
- Introduce your partner to another pair.
- When I turn the lights off and on, we’ll end the activity.
Discuss

- How did you feel during the icebreaker?
- What might students take away from this icebreaker?
- How might you modify this icebreaker for different sized classes?
Icebreakers

2 Truths and a Lie

Classroom Inventory

Bingo

Interviews
First Impressions

VS.

VS.

VS.
What’s at stake?

What do you hope to accomplish during your first day of class?

Think-Pair-Share
The First Day

Who are you?
- What are you like?
- What do you expect?

Who are they?
- What do they know?
- What do they want?
Who are you?

I wonder what his story is.

Who is she?

Would I want to have coffee with her?

How long has he taught for?

Who is she?
Who are they?

Things you might want to know about your students:

1) Who they are: year, major, interests, etc.
2) Where they’re coming from: previous courses taken, background/prior knowledge.
3) Why they’re in your class.

How might you learn more about your students?
What students want to know . . .

- What will class meetings be like?
- What will they learn?
- What will you expect from them?
Things to consider . . .

- How can you make the first day typical of future class meetings?
- Is there a way to introduce your course content in an activity?
What about the syllabus?

- **Option 1:** Save for the last 5 minutes of class.
- **Option 2:** Do not distribute in class: give out electronically (email, BB, etc.) with an assignment.
Today we will:

- Introductions
- Course Expectations
- Textbook introduction
- Syllabus Scramble
- Q&A
- Reminders for next class
Case Studies

Work with a partner on the case studies
Blow their minds.

How can you make students excited about your course?
- Ask students to apply their knowledge to a problem in the field.
- Dispel a common misconception.
- Connect the course to current events.
- Set up a mystery to be solved in the course.
Some different ideas to try:

- Best and worst classes
- First Day Graffiti/Gallery Walk
- Syllabus Speed Dating
- Irritating Behaviors: Theirs and Ours (Weimer, 2013)
Relax and have fun the first day!!
QUESTIONS?

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Ideas Today That You Can Use Next Week