The First Day of Class

TA Day
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Overview

✓ What is good practice for undergraduate education?
✓ Who are the undergraduates?
✓ How could I prepare for the first class?
✓ What is important during the first class?
✓ Conclusion
Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

1. Encourage contact between students and faculty
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students
3. Encourage active learning
4. Give prompt feedback

Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

5. Emphasize time on task
6. Communicate high expectations
7. Respect diverse talents & ways of learning

Who are the undergraduates?

- Approx. 31,207 undergrads (inc. affiliates)
- Roughly 5,375 full-time 1st year undergrads (main campus only)
- Majority from London or “905” area
- Approx. 11.2% of first year undergrads are international students (main campus only)

How could I prepare?

The week before…

- Check out the classroom
- Review the course syllabus
- Meet with the course coordinator
- Observe a class
How could I prepare?

The week before…

✓ Set your office hours
✓ Develop a class plan
✓ Organize yourself

The First Day

✓ Arrive early
✓ Put vital facts on “board”
✓ Introduce yourself
✓ Introduce the course
The First Day

✓ Outline your (reasonable) expectations for your students - for example,

- Attend all classes
- Arrive on time
- Respect the learning environment

The First Day

✓ Outline students’ (reasonable) expectations – for example,

- You will be punctual
- You will be in your office at specified hours
- You will create a pleasant learning environment
- You will respond to e-mail/telephone calls within XX hours/days
The First Day

- Student Info
- Icebreakers
- Start Teaching
- Be Enthusiastic!!!!

The First Day

Icebreaker - course expectations

- Students each write 3 course expectations
- Form groups of four - find consensus on 3 expectations
- Group recorder reports to class for each group
- Instructor responds after all groups report
The First Day

Icebreaker - finding commonalities

- Binding & finding things in common
- Pair students together based on responses to a question
- Give pairs 2 minutes to talk & discuss other common experiences/traits
- Each student introduces partner & tells one thing in common

The First Day

Icebreaker – finding commonality

- How many have moved more than three times in their life?
- How many have more than three siblings?
- How many were born in a different country?
- How many have travelled outside of Canada?
The First Day

Build rapport

✓ Greet class as a whole or students individually
✓ Learn students’ names early
✓ Take attendance (?)

The First Day

Build rapport

✓ Boost student self-esteem
✓ Talk to students before/after class
✓ Use humour, when appropriate, to create somewhat informal atmosphere
Conclusion

“Instructor-student interactions affect not only the level of student participation, but also students’ learning, self-esteem, satisfaction, and even their motivation to succeed in their career choices”

(Sandler, Silverberg and Hall, 1996, The Chilly Classroom)

Questions?

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