“Your success during the school year will be determined by what you do on the first days of school. . . . Your purpose is to affect lives and effective teachers affect lives.”

"Your First Class: How to Make it First Class"

Billy Strean, Ph.D.
3M National Teaching Fellow
Faculty of Phys. Ed. & Recreation

August 31, 2015
Welcome to PAC 320 – “Structure & Strategy of Games”  
January, 2012

Please start completing this sheet now. You will have time to finish it later.

Name you like to be called:

* (optional) Phone #:
[if the best way to contact you in emergency is cell or text]

* What motivates you to take this course?

* Greatest interest/excitement about this course

• Game(s) you are most interested in learning (more) about:
• Game(s) with which you are most experienced or skilled:

* Biggest concern/fear about this course

* Career goals

* (optional) Something goofy/interesting about yourself

• Anything else you would like me to know
Who’s Here?
Overview

• Warm-up
• A Perspective for 1st Day/Teaching & Some Tips
  • Human Connection & Learning Environment
  • Ground Rules/Guidelines
  • “Flavour Scene” - Setting the Tone
• Examples of 1st Days
• What “The Best College Teachers” Do
AUGUST 19TH, 2015

The First Day of Class: A Once-a-Semester Opportunity

By: Maryellen Weimer, PhD

There's only one first day of class. Here are some ideas for taking advantage of opportunities that are not available in the same way on any other day of the course.
A few highlights

• Intro: Background - Connections - Motivation
• Why this course matters
• What are the benefits (e.g., skills)
• Share your commitment/enthusiasm
• Learn about your students

“It’s the day in the course when it’s easiest for the teacher to genuinely smile. You have only good news to share, so let them hear it.”
It All Starts with a Smile*

* thanks to Dr. Cliff Kuhn

Partners
Human Connection

One of the most fundamental principles in effective teaching is increasing teacher/student contact and connection (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Lowman, 1995).
Ground Rules
& the supporting conversation
"Developing a shared vision of how the classroom is run increases student buy-in."

"Creating a shared sense of values and norms sets the stage for a restorative, rather than punitive, approach if a discipline issue arises."

Community

• Teaching students vs. A discipline/Content

• Start with the students
Community

Ontological Reality

Epistemological Necessity

Pedagogical Asset

Ethical Corrective
A life-affirming leader is one who knows how to rely on and use the intelligence that exists everywhere in the community, the company, the school, or the organization. A leader these days needs to be a host—one who convenes people, who convenes diversity, who convenes all viewpoints in creative processes where our intelligence can come forth.

Margaret Wheatley,
The Berkana Institute
“Hospitality Intelligence”

- Loving Heart
- Gentle Spirit
- Respectful Attitude
- Open Arms
Introduce The Host
What are your concerns about teaching?

What are your students' concerns about learning?
Think - Pair - (Square) - Share
1st day as "Flavour Scene"
What's your core metaphor for teaching?

“Epistemic Apprenticeship”
Lessons available?

- Know your students
- Relationship-community first
- Promises and exploration
- Battle? Journey together?
- Your role?

Introduce the Instructor
Set a Positive Tone/Atmosphere
Course objectives/expectations
Assumptions

Language/Mind

Emotion/Mood

Sensations

Body ≈ Human Being
“Book learning tends to stay in the book.”

“Learning is a myth until it is embodied.”
Conversation vs. Performance
“... the routine many outstanding teachers follow the first day of class... they usually talk about the promises of the course, about the kinds of questions the discipline will help students answer, or about the intellectual, emotional, or physical abilities that it will help them develop. ... inviting colleagues to dinner rather than ... a bailiff summoning someone to court” (Bain, 2004, pp. 36-37)
Learning Outcomes

What do you want students to be able to do (knowledge, skills, attitudes) by the end of the course?
Natural Critical Learning Environment

• Intriguing problem or question

• Guidance in understanding question's significance

• Higher order thinking

• Helps answer questions

• Leaves students with a question

  • What's the next question

  • Major conclusions?/What questions remain?
Get Their Attention & Keep It

Provocative act, question, or statement

Stimulating case study, goal-based scenario
For Contrast - Another Class
"Words and ideas can change the world"
Lessons available here?

- Acknowledging where they are
- Promises and exploration
- Journey together?
- Your role?
Linking the First Week of Class to End-of-Term Satisfaction: Using a Reciprocal Interview Activity to Create an Active and Comfortable Classroom

David A. Foster
Western Oregon University

Anthony D. Hermann
Bradley University

We present a reciprocal student-instructor interview activity as a means for establishing a positive classroom environment on the first day of class. This activity allows the instructor to clearly and concisely communicate the course practicalities to students while simultaneously providing students with the opportunity to share their course-related goals and concerns in an open and supportive environment. Previous research suggests that this activity is associated with many positive short-term outcomes, including initial changes in student comfort in the classroom. This article provides instructors with detailed information for conducting the activity and explores the degree to which changes in comfort are related to end-of-term student satisfaction. Data were collected from 77 students before and after they participated in the reciprocal interview activity during the initial class sessions and at the end of the term. Changes in student comfort were positively correlated with student satisfaction with the instructor and course. These findings support the use of this reciprocal interview activity in creating and maintaining an effective learning environment.

Keywords: class interview, college teaching, comfortable classroom, first day, instructor and student expectations

Conventional wisdom for effectively teaching college courses suggests that the initial class sessions are critical for establishing an effective learning environment. Common suggestions for successfully beginning a college course include fostering instructor-student rapport through ice breakers and other activities (e.g., Lucas 2006; Royse 2001), communicating clear and concise expectations (e.g., Curzan and Damour 2000; Davis 1993), conducting activities that involve a wide variety of students (e.g., Provitera-McGlynn 2001), sharing information about yourself (e.g., McKeachie and Svinicki 2006), and involving students in the making of course rules of conduct (DiClementi and Handelsman 2005). In addition, McKeachie and others (e.g., McKeachie and Svinicki 2006; Nilson 2003) have long advised instructors to craft their first day activities to promote the types of behavior desired during the rest of the term. Such advice underscores experts’ beliefs that the first days of a college course are particularly important in creating an effective learning environment and that students are strongly affected by these initial meetings.

We addressed this myriad of goals for the initial class sessions with a single reciprocal interview activity between students and the instructor. The activity was originally developed for the teaching of industrial/organizational psychology to demonstrate effective communication between employers and employees during an initial employment interview (Harvey and Brown 2000; Osland et al. 2006). This exercise allows the instructor to clearly and concisely communicate the course practicalities to students as an employer would describe job duties and responsibilities to a new employee. The interview activity also provides the students with the opportunity to share their course-related goals and concerns in an open and supportive environment. This article provides instructors with detailed information for conducting the activity and explores the degree to which changes in comfort are related to end-of-term student satisfaction. Data were collected from 77 students before and after they participated in the reciprocal interview activity during the initial class sessions and at the end of the term. Changes in student comfort were positively correlated with student satisfaction with the instructor and course. These findings support the use of this reciprocal interview activity in creating and maintaining an effective learning environment.
Seek Commitments

- Example: attending every class
- (You commit to making it worth it)
Centering
Conclusions & Questions

• What are your “takeaways”? 

• What questions remain?

Think - Pair - Share
Questions & Convo
Before Closing
Need a Laugh?

- Wednesday, September 9 @ 12:10-12:50
- “KIVA” ED N2-103
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