

**THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS:
SETTING THE STAGE FOR A
SUCCESSFUL SEMESTER**

Adapted and used
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PLANNING STRATEGICALLY

- On your handout, write down 5 things *you* would want to know on the first day of class in a course that you are teaching.
- Think about why these are important to you.
- Put a checkmark beside the points that you believe would be important to your students.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

- What do we know about first impressions?
- “You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”
(author unknown)



MOST IMPORTANT DAY???

- Some say the first day is the most important day of the semester . . .
- What do you think?
- What do you suppose the students think?

CLASSROOM NORMS

- Sets the “norms” for the rest of the semester.
- What would be the “ideal” class for your course?
- Take a moment to briefly describe the ideal class for a course you are teaching on your handout.

SETTING THE NORMATIVE TONE OF YOUR CLASS

- Do you want classroom participation?
⇒ **make it happen on day one**
- Do you want small group work?
⇒ **make it happen on day one**
- Do you value student input and opinions?
⇒ **make it happen on day one**

TEACHING/ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR DAY ONE

In the second column of your handout, list the type of teaching or engagement strategies you could use to set the ideal norms for your class (don't need to say specifically what they will be at this point).

FULL CLASS OR PARTIAL CLASS?

- Literature is a bit mixed on this.
- Don't do this: Hand out syllabus, read it to class, and let them go.
- Must be some substantive engagement with course material on that first day, but not necessarily a full session.

WHAT TO DO ON FIRST DAY?

- Present syllabus to the students.
- Introduce the course topic and/or some initial material.
- Require at least some students to participate – most important point.
(J. Lang, 2008)

SYLLABUS

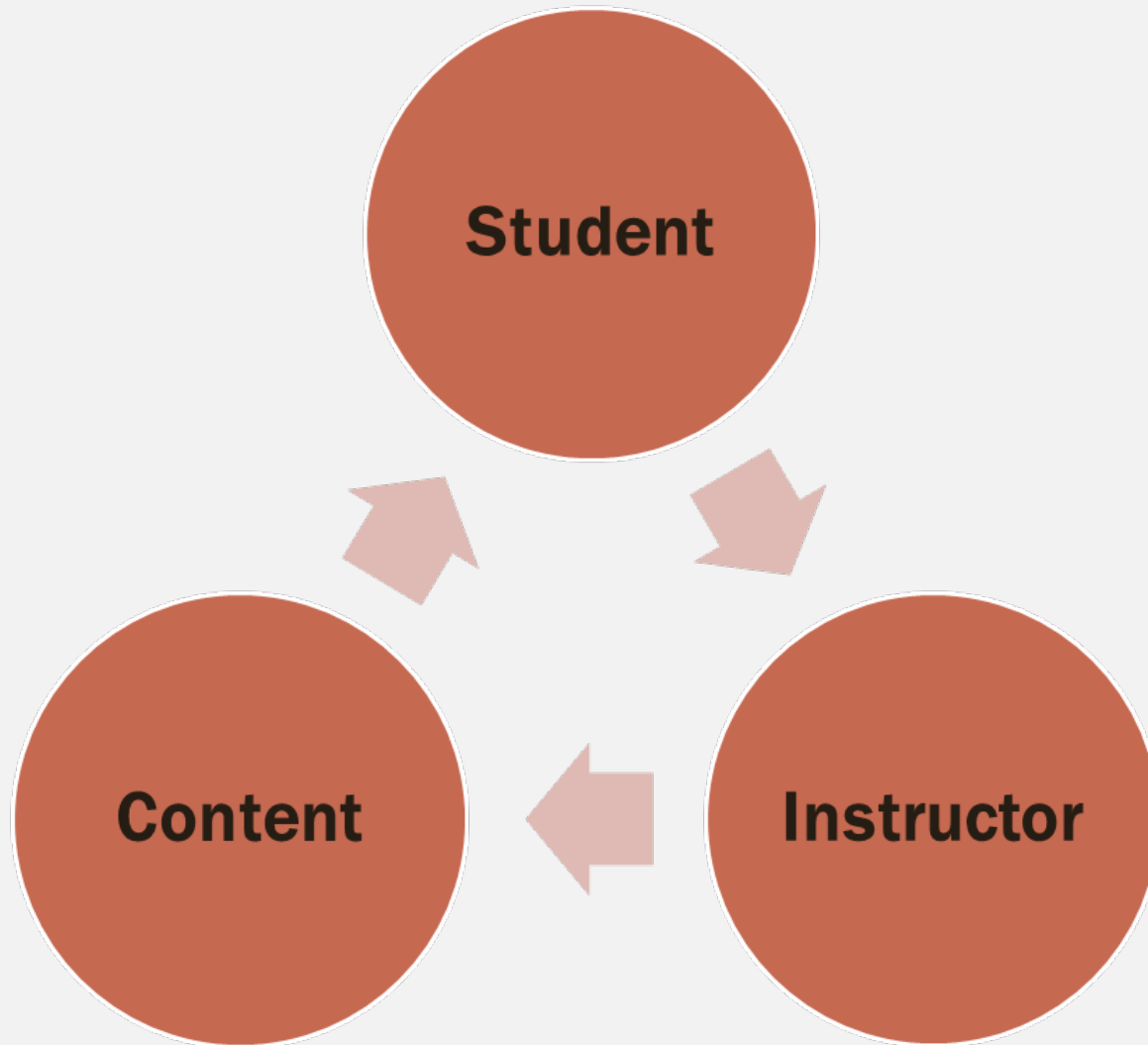
- Should you read it? Expect students to read it?
- Suggestions to make it interesting?
- How about a “syllabus quiz” for homework?
- Find a way to highlight important information.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Use the first class to “make connections”
rather than to “give directions”
(J. Kreizinger, 2006)

1. Connect students to instructor.
2. Connect instructor to content.
3. Connect content to students

MAKING CONNECTIONS



ICEBREAKERS

- Mixed review in literature - some students like them; others don't.
- Think of primary purpose: get students to interact, connect with each other, and “breaks the ice”.
- Try to think of an icebreaker that relates to your course.

INFORMATION SHEETS

- What would you like to know about your students?
- Hand out index cards:
 - ✓ Name
 - ✓ Phone number
 - ✓ Where they are from
 - ✓ Where they would go if they could travel anywhere in the world
 - ✓ Favorite type of music
 - ✓ What they hope to learn from the course (or a question you pose about their knowledge of topics in the course)

SHARE YOUR ENTHUSIASM FOR YOUR COURSE MATERIAL

- Sharing intriguing questions, paradoxes, or mysteries that relate to your course material grabs the students' attention from the beginning.
(see J. Lang, 2008, p. 37)
- Provide reasons for students to become excited about the course material.

LEARN STUDENT NAMES

- Any helpful hints?
- Remember the importance of making connections with students.

FINAL THOUGHTS OR IDEAS?

I hope that you will consider incorporating some of these ideas into your teaching as you begin classes next week.

Thank you for your participation!

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