

First Impressions Matter: Make the First Day Count

Here are some simple strategies for making the first day of your course work for both you and your students:

1. **Arrive early.** Introduce yourself to students as they come in and welcome them to your course. This will help you begin to establish rapport with the students and set a comfortable tone for the course.
2. **Share something about yourself.** Make sure students know a bit about you – your interests, your hobbies, or your family. This helps them see you as a human being and not just a faculty member.
3. **Facilitate introductions between students.** Students will feel more comfortable if they can get to know others in the class. Many faculty accomplish introductions with first day icebreakers.
4. **Learn about them.** Ask students to complete a survey of their interests or to share something unique about themselves with the class. You can find sample items for an interest inventory [here](#).
5. **Set expectations.** Go over the learning outcomes for the course and your expectations for attendance, participation, behavior and assignment quality.
6. **Talk about your texts.** The first day is a good time to introduce your textbook or readings and give some guidance about bringing them to class, when and how to read them, and how you will use them.
7. **Start covering course material.** Don't just go over the syllabus and dismiss class on the first day. Students will realize you take your content seriously if you start quickly with some subject matter.
8. **Engage in a learning activity.** Get students thinking and moving from day one. It sets an energetic tone.

Regardless of the activities you choose for the first day, you will want your students to feel welcome and comfortable from the very beginning.