



CETL TIPS: The First Day of Class

Seize the opportunity to set the climate for the rest of the semester by planning thoughtfully for the first day of classes. Consider how your goals and objectives for students are most likely to be received. You might begin this task by thinking back to what first spurred your own interest in the subject matter. Was there a mentor in your own life who got you curious about the topics you now teach? When you enter the classroom with an attitude of dynamic engagement, your passion for the subject matter can have a contagious effect. You will set the tone for the rest of the semester on this first day so whatever teaching style is your preferred method, be sure to incorporate it into your plans for the first day.

Before the first day of class, you may find it useful to visit the space in which you will be teaching. Familiarize yourself with the layout and identify any tools you will need that are not present in the room, such as technology or media equipment.

Some major goals for the first day of class may include:

Review Your Expectations - course objectives as outlined in the course syllabus are an ideal springboard for this discussion.

Establish Rapport - build a sense of community in the classroom by letting students know they are more than just faces in an anonymous sea of learners.

Engage Students Interactively - this is an important step in letting students know that they will be active participants in the learning process. Some approaches to getting students involved may include self introductions, small or large group discussion, or 1-minute writing tasks.

Factor in Time for Student Questions - create a learning environment that values inquiry by making time for students to voice their concerns.

Complete Administrative Tasks - hand out the course syllabus and finalize student enrollment status.

Online Resource Links

[University California Berkeley - Office of Educational Development \(<http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/firstday.html>\)](http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/firstday.html)

References:

Davis, Barbara Gross. *Tools for Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

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