

## Selected Online Resources

- Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Carolina. (1988). The first day of class ... a day of missed opportunities? Available online at <http://ctl.unc.edu/fyc1.html>.
- Barbara G. Davis. The first day of class. Available online at <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/bgd/firstday.html>.
- Eastern Kentucky University Teaching and Learning Center. (n.d.). Starting a course. Available online at <http://www.tlc.eku.edu/tips/starting/>.
- L. Dee Fink, University of Oklahoma Instructional Development Program. (1999). First day of class: What can/should we do? Available online at <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/firstday.htm>.
- Delivee L. Wright, Teaching and Learning Center, University of Nebraska. (1999). The most important day: Starting well. Available online at <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/dayone.htm>

### Center for Teaching and Learning

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**Center for Teaching and Learning**

*Teaching Tips: The First Day of Class*

## *The First Day of Class*

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That first class is the most important session of the semester. Let your vocal and body language project your love of your subject field. You should give the message that this is the most important class they will have in their program and then illustrate why you believe that is true. The first day of class sets the tone for the entire semester.

Try some of these tips for a smooth first day, first week and first semester.

- Get to the classroom a little early. You may need to find out how it is arranged, how long it takes you to get there.
- Greet students as they arrive. Setting this conversational tone with them early lets your students know they can come and talk with you.
- Involve students quickly. Getting them involved will help them feel included and help them feel comfortable talking with others. Have your students do something. Have them write one or two things they hope to learn in class, collect them and share them with the class.
- Communicate your expectations for the course. Let your students know what you value and why you value it. If participation is important, let them know how you expect them to participate.
- Let your students know what they'll be expected to do in the course. Explain how many tests, exams and papers there will be and what kind of feedback you will provide. Explain how their grade is determined.
- Clearly communicate your acceptable classroom behavior standards.
- If you are using a textbook, bring it to class so they can see the book.
- Answer their questions. It may be difficult to predict ALL the questions, but be honest and let them know YOUR answers.
- Explain where your office is and encourage them to come by and visit you during office hours. If you see your students around campus, say hello to them and ask them how your class is going.
- Learn their names quickly, and call on them by name. Having them sit in the same seat for the first week can help learn names
- Let your students know the importance of this class. How will this class help them? What will this class prepare them for in the following semester?
- Linger around your classroom at the end of the first class and chat with students.
- Above all, start on time and end on time. You are setting an expectation for the entire semester.

## *Ice-Breaker Ideas*

- Have students pair up with another student and introduce them to the class.
- Have students pair up and share their concerns about the class. As the groups share with the class, the instructor can address the concerns.
- Have students pair up and generate 3-5 questions about the class. As the groups share with the class, the instructor can use the syllabus to address their questions.
- For more ice-breaker ideas, contact the CTL.

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### **Need more information? Check out the following books from the CTL:**

Barbara G. Davis. (1993). *Tools for teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Robert Magnan, (Editor). (1990). *147 practical tips for teaching professors*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing

William McKeachie. (2002). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers*. (11th Ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.