Getting A Great Start: the First Day of Class

The Foundation for a Successful Course

Susan V. Crosson
Santa Fe Community College
Gainesville FL
Fix It Before It Breaks!

- Student Demographics
- Student Retention
- Course Plan
Student Demographics

Essential Demographics of Today’s College Student
by Edmund Hansen,
AAHE Bulletin,
November 1998
Student Retention!

Can raise or lower standards by....

Setting expectations at proper levels up front....

And doing a better job of keeping them actively involved throughout the class....
Course Plan

Course Goals
Curriculum, Course, and Professor

Course Basics
Syllabus and Calendar

Orientation/First Day
Student Readiness
Student To Do List
Student Consent Form

Course Sessions
Learning Objectives

Teach Learn Assess
First Day Keys to Success

- Course Readiness: To Do List
- Create Course Dialogue:
  - Student Survey
- Course Contract:
  - Syllabus
- Rules of Engagement:
  - Consent Form
- Ethics Survey
Develop Course Readiness

- **Purpose:**
  - Is student ready to take an accounting course?

- **Activity:**
  - First Day’s “To Do List”
Are Students Ready to Take an Accounting Course?

**Technical Considerations**
- Comfort Level With Computers
- Basic Computer Skills
- Internet Access
- Internet Skills
- Previous Accounting Experience

**Learning Styles and Learning Issues**
- Independent Learning
- Text-based Learning
- Course Management Skills
- Prerequisites
First Day Orientation

The To Do List contains:

- Required course materials
- Course website url
- Basic course tasks
- Course procedures
- Departmental/College resources and procedures
- Discovery Learning: A scavenger hunt designed to acquaint students with the course, its expectations, and resources.

First Day of Class To Do List
Creating Course Dialogue

• **Purpose:**
  - To create a positive learning environment
  - To align Student-Faculty course expectations
  - To develop class interaction

• **Activity:**
  First day questions.
Sample Student Survey: The Six Questions

• Background?
• Experience with accounting?
• What are your tech skills?
• What are your expectations?
• What else is going on with your life?
• What questions do you have for the instructor?
Sample Student Survey:
The Six Questions & More

What have you heard about this class?
Sample Student Survey: The Six Questions & More

What is your biggest fear or concern about this class?
Sample Student Survey: The Six Questions & More

Grade expectation?
Sample Student Survey: The Six Questions & More

Career expectation?
Sample Student Survey: The Six Questions & More

Your best strategy for succeeding in a college course?
Sample Student Survey: The Six Questions & More

What is this course about?
Course Contract

• **Purpose**
  • An effective syllabus

• **Activity:**
  • Review and revise your syllabus
Contract: Syllabus

A checklist of its essential contents:

• Professor Contact Information
• Course Objectives, Competencies, and Outcomes.
• Course Schedule, Due Dates, Deadlines. Calendar.
• Course Prerequisites and Special Requirements
• Course Credit. Policies and Grade Criteria
• Course Materials and Resources
• Special Project Information
• Student Grade book
Course Rules of Engagement

• **Purpose:**
  • To validate student receipt of the course requirements.

• **Activity:**
  • Design your course’s consent form
Sample of a Student Consent Form

Each student must read, sign, date, and return this form either by fax or by US Mail (to be received no later than the last day of drop/add). This form must also be attached to an email sent to the instructor of your course.

I________, Social Security #__________, do hereby agree to all the conditions for participation in this distance learning course. In addition, I swear that all work performed and submitted in this class will be my own. I understand that should ANY work performed in this class be determined to not be of my own hand and creation, I will fail the class AS A WHOLE. I may also be subject to additional disciplinary measures.

I have completed the course orientation. Thus, I understand that I must have access to and fluency with a computer equipped with an e-mail program capable of transmitting attached files and with World Wide Web access. I understand that should this equipment fail, I must assume responsibility for making necessary repairs in a timely fashion so that I may continue in this course.

I further understand that it is my responsibility to submit all work in a timely manner and that the grades on my work will suffer appreciably should my assignments not arrive on time.

I agree to take required exams on campus at the date and time stated.

Signature_____________________          Date___________________
Raising Awareness of Ethics

• **Purpose:**
  • To stress the importance of student integrity in class and in the workplace.

• **Activity:**
  • [Ethics Survey Results]
  • Cartoon
Mini Ethics Case

Communication, Integrity, and Teamwork:
What two legs does the boss stand on? What about the three employees? How about you? Why?
Susan Crosson’s Homepage

http://inst.sfcc.edu/~scrosson

Any comments are welcome:

susan.crosson@sfcc.edu

or 352-395-5137