Your First Class

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Outcomes: By the end of this session, participants will be able to…

- Develop strategies for making your first class go well
- Recognize the value in setting the tone / classroom environment in your first class with students
- Understand the role of a TA / instructor in adding value to student learning

Before Your First Class:

- Make a checklist of beginning course items (e.g., syllabus, handouts, etc.)
- Make a plan for the class

Strategies for Dealing with Pre-Class Nerves:

- Practice in advance
- Dress comfortably (but professionally)
- Talk to students before class
- Begin class with some discussion questions

The Day of Your First Class:

- Make a plan for the day- leave time for any last minute prep work
- Find your class (is it somewhere you already know?)
- Try to relax and briefly review your course plan right before the class

During Your First Class:

- Offer Added Value
  - Teach! Give students a reason to come back!
    ■ Facilitated discussion, interactive lecture, classroom demonstration
    ■ Be an engaging link between experts and novices
  - Link labs, recitation sections, or other assignments to the lecture
• Give students friendly tips and advice about resources

● Create an Enjoyable Classroom Environment
  ○ Make an inclusive classroom
    ■ activities that help students share and connect with the material
  ○ Provide thoughtful responses in class
    ■ LARA method
  ○ Be mindful of tone and body language

● Motivate Your Students
  ○ Connect material to students’ interests
  ○ Provide authentic, real-world tasks
  ○ Show relevance to their lives and careers
  ○ Show your own passion & excitement for the material (+ the value you place on the subject / field)
  ○ Describe effective study strategies
  ○ Use personal statements (e.g., “I would approach this problem by…”)

ACTIVITY

If you are a TA:

• Make a task list of things to do to help you prepare for your first class.

If you are an instructor:

• Plan out your first class in 15 minute increments.