

# FIRST 4 WEEKS

For each category, determine which “first four weeks” success strategies you already practice and which will be a goal for you next semester. Remember that not all strategies work for all instructors. **Choose the strategies that fit your teaching style and comfort level.**

Current Practice	Goal	Build and Encourage Relationships
		Learn as many of your students’ names as possible or have students put up name tents. Learn to pronounce names correctly.
		Share the <a href="#">Principles of Community</a> in a brief and meaningful way by sharing what they mean to you, share the principles, but highlight 2-3 that help build community, and/or have the students reflect on the principles in pairs. If appropriate, attach the principles to a homework or in class assignment.
		Find a way to express to your students that you want all of them to succeed and you believe in them. Commit to this as a regular practice.
		Share something about yourself and your passion for your subject content.
		Share your pronouns or gender references in class and syllabus. Provide an opportunity for students to share chosen name and pronouns with you. Encourage students to do so with each other as they get to know each other but let them know sharing pronouns is optional.
		Give students a specific reason to attend your office hours, like turning in an assignment.
		Get students into small groups. Conduct an ice-breaker and encourage groups to share contact information. Give time for group engagement at least once a week (note comparison, concept understanding check-in, assignment check-in, questions, etc.). Give groups a specific prompt to address during these brief meetings.
Current Practice	Goal	Set Expectations/Motivate Students
		Set, create, and discuss class norms/community standards/ground rules... as a class.
		Consider your location in class. Instructor proximity is a motivator of student engagement. Find a way to teach from everywhere in the room.
		Share tools with students for responding to tension, “hot topics” conflict, and disagreements in classroom.
		Explain the context or “big picture” of your course. Briefly describe the topics that will be covered. Explain how this course is relevant in students’ academic, professional and personal lives.
		Let students know what they need to do to be successful in YOUR course. Talk about it in class or post on Canvas. (OR Have students write a note to next semester’s students on how to be successful in your course. Share these notes with your new students.)
		Model how to recover from a mistake such as misgendering a person, mispronunciation of a name, affirming stereotypes, ignoring certain populations or other missteps that perpetuate exclusion and isolation.
		Demonstrate how previously successful students have taken notes in your class. Early on assign an exercise that results in students finding out the quality of their notes. Show examples of high quality notes. Find those who take excellent notes and pair them up with those who need to learn.
		Get students talking/writing about content on day 1 – to each other, to you, and to themselves in writing. It’s easy to think you know something in your head; it is another to explain it aloud or to write about it.
		Model what you expect from students. (Start and finish class on schedule, be prepared for class, be responsive, be truthful, respectful, fair and available, etc.) Model quality.
		Get students actively involved in the content of the syllabus. Consider a syllabus quiz, small group discussion, PollEverywhere.com, Kahoot classroom quiz, etc.

Current Practice	Goal	Promote Active Engaged Learning
		Perform at least one CAT (Classroom Assessment Technique)—like a minute paper, muddiest point – per week.
		Provide opportunities for students to discuss the difference between dialogue, discussion and debate and how each communication opportunity is helpful in learning.
		Have students set a goal at the beginning of class for that class period. Give students a choice of 3, for example: 1) <i>I will stay focused, no multi-tasking</i> 2) <i>I will write down/highlight any concept that I will need to revisit after class to better understand,</i> 3) <i>I will write down any questions I have, ask the questions or find answers later.</i> Vary your goal choices weekly or bi-weekly.
		Address tension, conflict and disagreements with good facilitation and conflict management skills in a timely manner and with processing strategies or tools. Learning can be gained in these experiences.
		Consistently engage students in at least one active learning strategy per class (like think-pair-share, concept mapping, clickers, jigsaws, magic moment or service learning).
		Use an anticipatory set, also known as a ‘hook’ at the beginning of class to get students’ attention, activate prior knowledge, and prepare students to learn. Save announcements for later.
		Connect learning activities to reading students were supposed to have completed before class.
Current Practice	Goal	Integrate Student Support into Learning Experiences
		Anticipate challenges students may have (childcare, transportation, working a lot of hours, no computer at home, etc.). Refer them accordingly with links in Canvas.
		Connect students to student resources at <b>strategic</b> times (TILT, Campus Life, the library, Counseling, Career and Employment Services, cultural and resource centers or online resources).
		Give students a specific reason to attend your office hours: set a specific agenda; give specific reasons to attend office hours, “If you’re unclear about _____, this would be a perfect week to come to office hours.” Project office hours on screen.
		Make suggestions about HOW to study for specific concepts in your course. Use the first four weeks to give several tips on studying smarter not longer.
Current Practice	Goal	Ensure that Students Know Where They Stand
		Clearly communicate your course grading policy.
		Create rubrics that clearly define grading criteria for each assignment and <b>provide these to your students when giving the assignment.</b>
		Within the first two weeks, have students complete a short in-class writing assignment or class quiz worth very few points. Grade and return this assignment within a couple of days. Consider including helpful suggestions as to how to improve performance or make a list of positives and common errors and distribute the list to students.
		Give students a short but rigorous test that is worth less than future tests will be worth, so students get a feel for the structure and difficulty level of tests for you course.
		Respond to students’ critical feedback about materials, curriculum or engagement regarding antiquated information, lack of representation, misrepresentation of culture or community with cultural humility and in a timely manner.
		Discuss with students their progress in the first couple of weeks and what they need to do to be successful in YOUR course. Direct them to available student resources that can support their success.