

How Can Student Learning Begin Before the First Day of Class?

Presented by:
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Presenter



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Practice is critical

... for a high-performing semester



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Research on the importance of the first day

- Establish early connections – Kreizinger
- Convert abstract concepts into concrete examples – LoSchiavo
- Engage new learners – Case
- Establish class ethos – Lang





Establishing class ethos

Principled practice:
 Practicing tests, papers, reading, and other high-stakes activities





How can this be done on the first day?

Begin a week before class starts





Outreach

- Letter invitation
- Introductory video
- Electronic version of the syllabus
- System of directions
- Headstart homework assignment



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Fourfold benefits

1. First day starts without preliminaries.
2. The model for the entire semester is set in motion.
3. Practice becomes integral to the course.
4. Students know what to do when the semester starts.



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Commit to the approach

To get started, choose one or two activities to try.



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Seven distinct parts of planning

1. Student and teaching filing systems
2. Schedule
3. Pre-class invitation letter to students
4. Screencast introduction
5. Directions for the semester
6. Reminders
7. Recheck class roster



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Step 1: Create file system

- Structure weekly teaching folder with template for future semesters
- Create student folders and Dropbox link



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Step 2: The schedule

Plan from the back of the course.
Mark milestones so you know what to practice



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Step 3: The letter

- Write a conversational syllabus in the first person and list the Dropbox link
- Link to BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS Dropbox folder
- Set up a MailChimp campaign



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Step 4: Make a short screencast

- Who I am
- Brief survey of the syllabus
- This self-playing QuickTime movie should be placed in your student folder



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Step 5: Create a jump-off webpage

- Set up a home page with all the links you'll use in the course. (Can use Weebly.com)
 - This launch site should have easily entered links.
 - Easily viewable on mobile devices.



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Step 6: Reminders

- Ask students to sign up by cell or email for course deadlines on remind.com
- Use youcanbook.me for student conferencing



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Step 7: Final roster check

- Flexibly align data to customizable columns in MailChimp



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New first day of class

- You already know who responded to invitation
- You know their rate of activity via MailChimp Analytics



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Best chances for success

Checklist all the tasks in a row
Set up an easy-to-follow routine of
structure and consequence



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