

Best Practices

1st Day of Class

I always have students introduce one another with a fairly complete profile. I gain, along with the students, the mix of education, experience and perspective they bring to the classroom. I always have name tags, and make sure that learning each other's names, is an important part in building trust and taking risk with ideas in class. I always have an 'expectations' session, so the students can relate to me what is most important for them to get out of the class. Finally, I have students develop the 'fourth page' of the syllabus. This is where they create the norms of behavior that we expect in class. It covers everything from cell phones to tardiness. They become their rules, and they are invariably as firm as ones I would provide myself. **Bob Abel**

I show my students Oncourse. I use it throughout the semester and feel that not many students understand the software. **Gina Ammerman**

Sticking to what I say. I ask the students to sign the syllabus, showing we have a contract. Then I stick to it. **Nora Barnard**

I create a thorough syllabus with requirements and grading checklists for all assignments. Then students are clear in advance. **Judith Batraw**

Beyond review of grading practice and course outline - why you're here and where we're going; Review of pre-reqs for the course - usually first the basic trigonometry involved immediately in general physics, and then the quadratic equation. Group problem or two. Demonstration with the metric system using store available items - hands on unit conversion. In math, graphing techniques - create a well labeled graph. **Ron Bingaman**

I have an exercise as part of the first day of my undergraduate classes to explicitly discuss my philosophy of teaching with my students. First, I place students into groups to discuss what their expectations are of me as the instructor of the course. I write a list of expectations on the board based on the responses generated by each group. I briefly address the items on the list to give the students a sense of my understanding of those expectations. Then I ask the students to rejoin their groups to discuss what their responsibilities are as students in the course. Once their responses are listed on the board, I explain my philosophy of teaching regarding the roles and responsibilities of instructor and student. This serves as a beneficial way to start the class with a proper learning relationship. **Jon Bingham**

I've had pretty good response to an ice-breaker in which students interview each other and then introduce their interviewee to the rest of the class. Asking them to include one important or unusual aspect of their lives as a way to help us remember them helps make the collection of students into a sharing group. **Paul Buelow**

Thoroughly review the syllabus. Explain class expectations of goals and objectives. **Robert L. Buggs**

Best practice--First day of class--index cards distributed to students who answer a list of questions that I provide. Gives me a better idea of how I proceed with the course. **Kathleen Forgey**

1st day of class: have a brainstorming activity divided into partners, and introduce each other and share findings with class. This way, everyone has made at least one connection before leaving class. **Mary Ann Frank**

My syllabus gives a detailed outline of the course, along with grading scale and course schedule. I use past student achievements to help motivate my current students (i.e. The students who have done all the homework problems, asked questions in office hours and/or were regulars in the Math Center did better overall than the students who did not.) I believe tests/quizzes should be scheduled and students should know which specific sections/topics will be covered. I try to treat all my students with the same respect and attention. **Andrea Gillett**

On the first day of class, I have observed that X100 students want to get started on their study of business - I briefly introduce the course (and go in more depth later) and get started on course content within 5-10 minutes of the beginning of class. **William Haeberle**

I like to make sure that I provide a syllabus/schedule to everyone on the first day of class. I make sure that the information provided lets the students know what is expected of them, what to expect from the class, and a schedule outlining what we will be doing each class meeting. **Jennifer Hampton**

Best Practices

1st Day of Class (cont'd)

I learn all of my students names, regardless of how many I have. So that they don't feel like some number in a classroom. **Jay Hardin**

I like to spend as much time as possible on letting the students get to know one another, introducing themselves, and doing an icebreaker activity. As a primarily commuter campus, I've found that my students might not know anyone on campus, and since we work in groups every day, I want to give them at least a few familiar faces. In my upper level courses, I have them interview each other in Spanish, in my lower level courses I provide an activity designed to get them chatting with a number of people and getting to know each other. **Catherine Hebert**

Memorize All the students names on the first day of class. **Hank H. Hernandez**

My first day icebreaker is one where I pass out notecards and ask students to write their name, where they are from, why they chose IPFW as an academic institution and what their expectations are for my class. Then I take up the cards, shuffle them and pass them out to the students. From that point students are asked to introduce a classmate on the notecard they have received. I will then ask the students to keep the notecard as a way of knowing at least one of their classmates. **Susan Howard**

First day Scavenger Hunt - Students have a list of questions and wander around, meeting classmates to see if others can answer the questions. **David Nickolich**

First day of class: I have students introduce themselves to each other in pairs, then they introduce each other to the class. **Ahmed Rachdi**

First day of class I pass out the syllabus, go over it, then I give a short exam taken from a citizenship test, let them self grade, and all failures must leave the country. This is a great ice breaker for Y 103 American Government which is mainly Freshmen attending this section. **Frank Waltermann**

After presenting the importance of the course topic to the students career objective, everyone (including the instructor) introduces themselves by answering a number of questions I provide. **Bill White**

I set the tone of class on the first day by start covering course material after briefly going over syllabus. **Lin Zhu**

1st Day of Class/Diversity

This fall I am teaching two sections of Culture and Society with 50 students each. Both classes meet once a week for 2.5 hours. After reviewing the syllabus and introducing ourselves, I used the remainder of the class to start breaking down the culture concept. We had a large group discussion incorporating examples from the students' own experiences and then broke into small groups to discuss personal experiences of cultural misunderstanding. This process not only got students engaged with the course content as something which would be useful in their own lives, but also helped them to get to know one another in a meaningful way. **China Scherz**

1st Day of Class/Motivation

Get to know the student better, inside and outside class activities. **Jacques Chansavang**

Communication: I put my lesson plans for the semester on Oncourse for reference: students can refer to these to review important info. regarding a task; absent students can review to see "what we did in class" and prepare for the subsequent class. **Terry Daley**

Thorough discussion of syllabus and policies on day one so students know where we are going
Use of humor in the class for motivation **Nancy Kitt**

Best Practices

Active Learning

I think the students are most engaged in my class when they are actually doing hands-on research on the computer or in the library, rather than when they are just listening to me and watching me demonstrate things. I've developed several in-class exercises where they work in pairs or small groups to research their topic. **Rhonda Culbertson**

I include many in class group activities to reinforce the content and assess understanding. **Glenda Dexter-Brown**

Best practices: team learning. Using Michelson's 8 team principles to create effectively team structured courses. **Marcia Dixson**

I have had a lot of success with a course that I use movies as the basis for case studies on characters (mental health assessment course) and the students have to collaborate on the project in small groups. **Erika Galyean**

My best practice is to give applied work such as problems and questions to do in order to help students learn the material and to prepare for exams. **Tom Lambert**

A best practice that I use in my math classes is that I have my classes break up in small groups and work on handouts after each lesson is taught. This reinforces that the students have an understanding of the material before they leave this class. **Susan Meshulam**

Active Learning/Motivation

I try to be prepared and interesting every day. I offer students opportunities to participate verbally and through written mini-tasks most days. **Walt Scott**

Assessment

I make them read the chapter before coming to class and I give open notes quizzes on that chapter for the first 10 minutes of the class. Does it sound like I am giving away grades? You would be surprised at how many freshmen don't even read the chapter and consistently receive zeroes on the quizzes. Of course, the hard workers get perfect scores on the quizzes. Then again, they are probably learning something in the process **Mark Bradford**

I regularly survey my class about any questions they may have. I use a wide variety of teaching methods in the classroom; I use lecture, discussion, films, group work, pre-exam ungraded quizzes, current events, etc. **Leda Casey**

Linkages: From Objectives to Group Activities to Assessment **Larita Killian**

My best practices include being able to gauge what is working with my students and what isn't and then switch gears midway through in order to meet the needs. **Laura Riggan**

One on one meeting with students to review, advise, etc. **Austin Ritterspach**

My best practice in assessment is talking my assessment of student papers by using the computer. **Joe Weaver**

I don't give tests. That does not mean students are not evaluated on their understanding of the materials. For most of the semester I give my students a take home quiz each week by requires them to read and respond in short essay to 10-15 questions. Additionally, their mid-term and finals are basically reading/writing assignments. It sounds like a simple, elementary format but it works. Consequently, I never lecture because students are ready to discuss, question and respond in class. **Mary Wheeler**

Best Practices

Diversity

In terms of diversity, getting students to step into someone's shoes from colonial America (history 105) or from nineteenth century America (history 106) **Robin Balthrope**

One time in an English class at a local prison I used rap lyrics to teach poetry analysis. **Scott Blackwell**

Nothing impresses more and gives a sense of belonging to students from a different culture than the instructor being knowledgeable about and/or showing interest in their culture. **Maria Krebs**

I like to show the movie "Freedom Writers" and have the students break into groups so that they can discuss questions provided after the movie. **TJ Stoops**

Motivation

Regarding motivation, I feel that the role of the instructor is to direct and to inspire the student in the learning process. My way of teaching is partially based on the belief that nothing I do as a teacher can substitute for the learning process, but everything I do can support the active engagement of my students in that process. I strongly believe that motivation is not something the teacher does to a student; it is something the student does to himself, and it is my responsibility to introduce these possibilities. **Christopher Dona**

Motivation is my best practice. Getting students up and out of their seats to meet and engage their fellow colleagues creates a climate of excitement that I try and maintain for the remainder of the semester. **Deborah Godwin-Starks**

I strive to provide my students with the initiative to go farther: in their careers, education, family life, etc. **Karen Johnson Green**

I find that one of the greatest motivators is putting the students themselves in charge. For example, I do a "debate" over one of the assigned readings, where they have to form into groups and argue for their point, and I have one set of students act as "judges." As judges, they can request further explanation from the debaters, make sure each person is talking, and decide who argued best without the students perceiving me as potentially judging unfairly in their competition. Similarly, in classroom discussion, I often begin by asking a student to ask one of the other students a question about the reading, and we proceed with each student having to ask a question of another person after answering her own question. This helps them feel involved and part of the process, and they're much more likely to keep pushing for more thorough answers than I am, since being put on the spot by other students tends to be less stressful than being put on the spot by the professor. **Jessica Kaiser**

Include a make-up journal or quiz day so that students feel they can make up for absences or missed assignments. Give them a means to keep track of their progress, e.g.. points. **Linda Wright-Bower**

Motivation/Active Learning

Engagement to be seems to be the primary key. Once you have that, real learning can begin. Also in my classes, I strive to include real world examples to support (and sometimes dispute) concepts. **Scott Orr**

I try to use a mixture of both Piagetian and Vygotskian tactics in the sense that I prefer to blend my classroom with material that is slightly above their level of thinking to teach by challenging, along with a diversity of experiences in order to teach through comparison and contrast. **David Piacenti**

Other

Throughout my class for non art majors, I continually try to get the students to make connections from their major to the visual arts, and also the visual arts to the every day life. **Stephanie Doty**

Best Practices

Other (cont'd)

I teach "Kate's Story," a narrative about Kate Comiskey who was a teacher at Indian Creek. She was killed by a driver under the influence. Her mother, Nancy Comiskey wrote Kate's brief life story in Indianapolis Monthly. I am able to cover narrative writing at its best, a story about education, and a story about making choices. I was Kate's nanny, and I will teach her story as long as I continue to teach. [Lyna Gunderson](#)