

# FIRST 4 WEEKS

## 26 Strategies for Success in Your Classroom

**Directions:** Please select at least 4 strategies from the following 26 to carry out in your classes. Consider choosing strategies from different categories.

### Build and Encourage Relationships

1. Learn your students' names and something else interesting about them.
2. Express to your students that you respect them and want all of them to succeed.
3. At the beginning of each class for the first few weeks, welcome your students and include the name of the course and your name in your greeting.
4. Share something about yourself and your passion for your subject content.
5. Ask students to express why they are in college as well as why they are taking your course.
6. Ask students to write about any challenges they may have (child care, transportation, working a lot of hours, no computer at home). Do they need help with these challenges? Refer them accordingly.
7. Contact any student who misses class.

### Raise Expectations

8. 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.
9. Let students know what they need to do to be successful in YOUR course.
10. 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. Find those who take excellent notes and pair them up with those who need to learn.
11. 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.
12. Engage the class in an academic vocabulary discussion. What constitutes missing class? When is a homework assignment late?

**Promote Active, Engaged Learning**

13. Perform at least one CAT (Classroom Assessment Technique)—like a minute paper, muddiest point.
14. Engage students in at least one active learning strategy (like think-pair-share, QR Code creation, clickers, jigsaws, magic moment or service learning).
15. Get students actively involved in the content of the syllabus. Consider a syllabus quiz, small group discussion, PollEverywhere.com classroom quiz, etc.
16. Honor the prior experience of the students. Mine their previous knowledge by discussing a discipline-related topic about which students will already have opinions/knowledge.

**Integrate Student Support into Learning Experiences**

17. Create an exercise that connects students to the campus learning labs/tutoring centers.
18. Create exercises that connect students to student resources like Campus Life, the library, Counseling and/or Career and Employment Services.
19. Make sure each student has a student handbook. Point out and discuss important topics—like academic integrity—and highlight useful features, for instance a weekly planner, if that is part of your student handbook.
20. Create an assignment that will demonstrate students are able to log into Blackboard (or whatever course management system your school uses) as well as update their contact information in Banner (or whatever college data system you use). Have them email you using their student email account. Sending an email from Blackboard to your students will let you know who has not set up a student email account. These students might need your help in completing this task. If help is available through your campus Blackboard coordinator, let them know.

**Ensure that Students Know Where They Stand (Feedback)**

21. Clearly communicate your course grading policy.
22. Create rubrics that clearly define grading criteria for each assignment and provide these to your students when giving the assignment.
23. In the first two weeks, have students complete a short in-class writing assignment or class quiz worth very few (or no) points. Grade and return this assignment the next class. Consider including helpful suggestions as to how to improve performance.
24. Provide students with your preferred mode(s) of communication as well as the amount of time it will take before a student can expect to hear back from you.
25. 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.

**Challenge Yourself Professionally**

26. Continue to engage in a strategy (not listed above) that has been successful for you or create a new one! Consider sharing this strategy with your colleagues.