First Four Weeks (F4W) Strategies

**Great Beginnings:** Things to do early in your classes to give your students a great start.

Please select at least 4 strategies from the following 10 to carry out in your classes this semester. Consider choosing strategies from different categories.

**Build and Encourage Relationships**

1) Learn your students’ names and something else interesting about them.

2) 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.

**Raise Expectations**

3) 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.

4) Let students know what they need to do to be successful in YOUR course.

5) 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.

**Promote Active, Engaged Learning**

6) Engage students in at least one active learning strategy (like think-pair-share, clickers, jigsaws, magic moment, or service learning.)

7) Get students actively involved in the content of the course syllabus. Consider using a syllabus quiz, small group discussion, PollEverywhere.com, Kahoot! Help? Call one of STLCC’s Learning Experience Consultants.

**Integrate Student Support into Learning Experiences**

8) Create an exercise that connects students to student resources, such as: Campus Life, STLCC Libraries, Tutoring, Writing Assistance, Counseling, Career and Employment Services, Degree Audit...)

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

9) Clearly communicate your course grading policy.

10) 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 STLCC Student Resources that can support their success.

**Goal: Challenge Myself Professionally**

Strategy of my own:  

________________________________________________________________________
More First Four Weeks Strategies

Build and Encourage Relationships

1) Express to your students that you respect them and want all of them to succeed.

2) 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.

3) Ask students to express why they are in college as well as why they are taking your course.

4) Share something about yourself and your passion for your subject content.

5) Contact any student who misses class.

Raise Expectations

6) 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.

7) Engage the class in an academic vocabulary discussion. What constitutes missing class? When is a homework assignment late?

Promote Active, Engaged Learning

8) Perform at least one classroom assessment technique (CAT), such as a minute paper, muddiest point, etc.

9) 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

10) Create an assignment that will demonstrate students are able to log into Blackboard, as well as update their contact information in Banner. Have them email you using their mystlcc.edu account.
    (Sending an e-mail from Bb to your students will let you know who has not set up a my.stlcc.edu student e-mail account. These students might need your help in completing this task.)

11) Make sure each student has a Fact Finder Student Handbook. Point out and discuss important topics – like academic integrity and highlight features like the weekly planner!

Ensure that Students Know Where They Stand (Feedback)

12) 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.

13) Create rubrics that clearly define grading criteria for each assignment and provide these to your students when giving the assignment. Learn how to create rubrics in Blackboard.

14) 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.