

Day One Activities

Begin with the end in mind. ~Stephen R. Covey

Instructors know to engage in active learning and discussion the first class meeting to set the right tone for the semester. Spending the first meeting reviewing the syllabus with no room for interaction sends a mixed message to the students. So, maximize teaching time by replacing traditional “name game” ice breakers with active learning exercises that review the syllabus, introduce the course, or relate to outcomes or competencies.

Tips and examples to promote first-day sharing:

1. Start with “safe” activities such as group work or think-pair-shares.
2. Tap in to students’ prior knowledge and goals with a KWL chart (Google “KWL chart” for explanations). Have students review the topics listed in the syllabus and textbook table of contents before presenting your course overview and then complete the KWL.
3. Before reviewing the syllabus, have students complete a “muddiest point” freewriting about the syllabus itself. Then have students share and answer each other’s questions in small groups. When you regroup and debrief, you’ll find that this strategy usually eliminates repetitive questions, helps students focus their questions, and helps you identify fuzzy areas in the syllabus.

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