

How Can I Use the First Day to Set the Tone for a Semester of Learning?

Presented by:

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Alexia Franzidiz has been teaching full-time in higher education since 2009. She serves as the program coordinator for the Tourism, Recreation, Sport program, and teaches courses related to tourism, hospitality, and events management. She has published five peer-reviewed articles on applied learning initiatives and engaging teaching strategies.



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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FIRST DAY?

- Introductions: Professor, students, content, materials, course objectives
- Share information – personal and professional
- Clarify “house rules” – eating, emails, responding to questions
- Share a road map for success in your course
- Set the tone, structure, expectations
- Engage students
- Establish rapport
- Demonstrate care about them as individuals within a community of learners
- Establish a collaborative and respectful culture



COMMON MISTAKES

- Not having class
- Ending early
- Reading the syllabus word-for-word
- Not reading the syllabus
- Jumping straight into content





SYLLABUS

- The contract
- Explicit – pre-reqs, test and project dates, grade weighting, etc.
- Implicit – general atmosphere of interaction, level of flexibility about assignment dates, severity of honor code violations, etc.

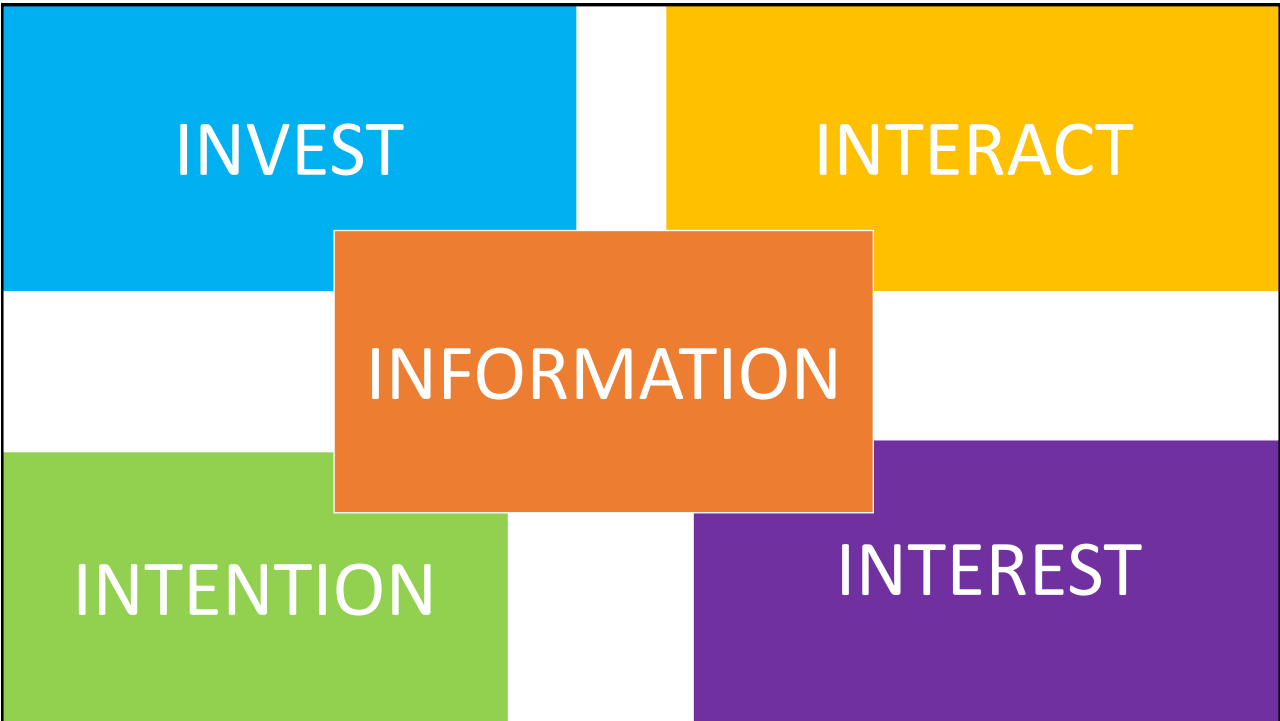


ENGAGING WITH THE SYLLABUS

Engagement activities so students read the syllabus

- Trivia-style questions based on content
- “Negotiate the syllabus” (Huelskamp, A.)
 - Non-negotiables
Student handbook, Honor Code, Grading scale
 - I Give
Preparation, care, respect, patience, knowledge, creativity, time, empathy, feedback, honesty, etc.
 - You Give
Common: effort, attention, respect, participation/engagement, curiosity, etc.
 - You Get
Privileges they would like to have – e.g., grace period when running late, drop lowest assignment grade, etc.
(Clause)







INFORMATION

Tell students what they will learn

Create a trivia game based on class content

Create a case study or example and ask students to Brainstorm tasks involved, connect and map with the course content



INTEREST

Ask students

- why they chose your class
- what excites them about the class content
- what might be challenging to learn





INVEST

- Share the course content
- Introduce community partners or field trips
- Demonstrate relevancy



INTERACT

Break the Ice

Find somebody who _____.

The Kite activity creates deeper conversations between students

Reflection

True Colors word sort – helps with group dynamics

Schwartz' Theory of Basic Values – how do they align





INTENTION

- Why are you here?
- List of main topics
 - 2-3 topics they know a bit about
 - 2-3 they are most excited to learn about
 - 1-2 most challenging for them to learn about



USE ACTIVITIES FOR...

- Ice-breakers
- Team/group and pair-based assessment
- Reflection/personal
- Positive culture
- Test-run the syllabus

Vary according to the nature of the course and assignments





GENERAL TIPS

- Come early
- Greet everyone
- Be familiar with your room – technology, seats (moveable),
- Express a personality type you can maintain
- Give students a full day's class
- Be intentional with activities



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Thank you!

Tell us what you think:



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/firstdaymentor>

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