TEACHING INCOMING STUDENTS IN PERSON AND ONLINE

Introducing ourselves and welcoming students:
- the first few class are particularly important for helping students to feel comfortable, adjust to new requirements and to be comfortable to ask questions
- we need to humanize ourselves; share our interests, hobbies, what excites us and our worries

Arrive early and stay for a few minutes after class (even online):
- it can be hard to approach professors, make sure students know we are available and willing to help

Provide feedback, early and often:
– incoming students making the transition from high school to university benefit from formative feedback (see tip sheet on feedback) , early and often in the semester

Teach to a variety of learning styles:
- be sensitive to the variety of ways that students learn
- include a variety of learning experiences

Recognize, embrace and include diversity:
- incoming students are diverse (age, gender, race, SES, first generation student, academic background, interests, etc.)
- take advantage of this diversity by encouraging students to use their unique outlooks/experiences in their work/group project/debates, etc.

Take advantage of our students' exploring, editing and creative skills:
- think about what students do well in the digital environment and create their assignments around these skills and behaviours - encourage peer review
- online, students quickly shift from being consumers to producers of content, and sharing is easy

Simplicity is key:
- provide clear guidelines on expectations through multiple platforms (welcome video, syllabus and first few lectures)
- share clear learning outcomes and a plan on how students can achieve them (i.e., rubrics for assessments)

Highlight students' individual experiences:
- students live and experience different lives
-encourage them to share these distinct experiences and help them use these experiences in their coursework.

When possible, emphasize group projects/discussions:
- help students to reflect on their own perspectives and to learn from one another

Model the way:
- show students the kinds of thinking we expect them to demonstrate on exams and other assignments
- help them to see/hear our thought processes as we tackle problems similar to what they are expected to encounter on their assignments and exams
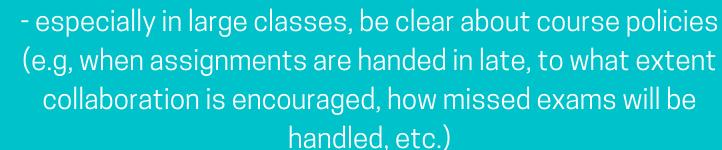
Clarify the relevance of the material:
- incoming students, in particular, need to understand the relevance of what they are learning and how it applies to the course (and bigger picture, when possible)

Be explicit about classroom expectations:
- especially in large classes, be clear about course policies (e.g, when assignments are handed in late, to what extent collaboration is encouraged, how missed exams will be handled, etc.)

Clearly define the learning expected:
- is it memorizing that is needed?
- is it a deeper, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of content?

Resources
Teaching First-Year Students. (n.d.). Retrieved July 06, 2020, from https://www.dal.ca/dept/clt/TFY.htmlFirst-Year Student Support. (n.d.). Retrieved July 06, 2020, from https://www.wwu.edu/teachinghandbook/student_considerations/first_year.shtmlQuick Links Menus. (n.d.). Retrieved July 06, 2020, from https://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/resources/first-year-experience-2/

TEACHING & LEARNING CENTRE
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