

FIRST 4 WEEKS

For each category, determine which “first 4 weeks” success strategies you already practice and which one will be a goal for you next semester.

Current Practice	Goal	Build and Encourage Relationships
		<p>Learn as many of your students’ names as possible or have students put up name tents.</p> <p>Find a way to express to your students that you want all of them to succeed. Commit to this as a regular practice.</p> <p>Share something about yourself and your passion for your subject content.</p> <p>Anticipate challenges students may have (child care, transportation, working a lot of hours, no computer at home). Refer them accordingly.</p> <p>Get students into small groups. Conduct an ice-breaker with the groups, encourage groups to share contact information. Give time for group engagement at least once a week (note comparison, concept understanding check-in, assignment check-in, questions, etc.). Give groups a specific prompt to address during these brief meetings.</p>
Current Practice	Goal	Set Expectations
		<p>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.</p> <p>Let students know what they need to do to be successful in YOUR course. Talk about it in class or post on Canvas. (OR Have students write a note to next semester’s students on how to be successful in your course. Share these notes with your new students.)</p> <p>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. Show examples of high quality notes. Find those who take excellent notes and pair them up with those who need to learn.</p> <p>Get students talking/writing on day 1 – to each other, to you, and to themselves in writing. It’s easy to think you know something in your head; it is another to explain it aloud or to write about it.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Get students actively involved in the content of the syllabus. Consider a syllabus quiz, small group discussion, PollEverywhere.com or Kahoot classroom quiz, etc.</p>

Current Practice	Goal	Promote Active, Engaged Learning
		<p>Consider your location in class. Proximity is the number one motivator of student engagement. Find a way to teach from everywhere in the room.</p> <p>Perform at least one CAT (Classroom Assessment Technique)—like a minute paper, muddiest point—per week.</p> <p>Have students set a goal at the beginning of class for that class period. Give students a choice of 3, for example: 1) <i>I will stay focused, no multi-tasking</i> 2) <i>I will write down/highlight any concept that I will need to revisit after class to better understand</i>, 3) <i>I will write down any questions I have, ask the questions or find answers later</i>. Vary your goal choices weekly or bi-weekly.</p> <p>Consistently engage students in at least one active learning strategy (like think-pair-share, concept mapping, clickers, jigsaws, magic moment or service learning).</p> <p>Conduct activities during the first 10 minutes of class. Brain research tells us that brains are most primed to work and learn during those first 10 minutes. Save announcements for later.</p> <p>Connect learning activities to reading students were supposed to have completed before class.</p>
Current Practice	Goal	Integrate Student Support into Learning Experiences
		<p>Create an exercise that connects students to the campus learning labs/tutoring centers.</p> <p>Create exercises that connect students to student resources like TILT, Campus Life, the library, Counseling and/or Career and Employment Services.</p> <p>Give specific reasons to attend office hours, “If you’re unclear about _____, this would be a perfect week to come to office hours.” Project office hours on screen.</p> <p>Make suggestions about HOW to study for specific concepts in your course. Use the first four weeks to give several tips on studying smarter not longer.</p>
Current Practice	Goal	Ensure that Students Know Where They Stand
		<p>Clearly communicate your course grading policy.</p> <p>Create rubrics that clearly define grading criteria for each assignment and provide these to your students when giving the assignment.</p> <p>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 or make a list of positives and common errors and distribute list to students.</p> <p>Give students a short but rigorous test that is worth less than future tests will be worth, so students get a feel for the structure and difficulty level of tests for you course.</p> <p>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.</p>