



Piloting a New LMS

Adjunct Faculty Academic Calendar

June:

30 Summer semester begins

July:

2 Spring Grades Due to Registrar by Noon

4 Independence Day – No Classes

August:

16 Classes, Final Exams End

20 Summer Grades Due to Registrar by Noon

25 Fall Semester Classes Begin

Workshops

(Register at: svsu.edu/workshops)

July 26, 2014

Summer Technology Institute

Morning Session

10:00 am – 12:00 pm in SE- 206

Afternoon Sessions

1:00 – 2:00 pm in SE-204
Lunch will be provided

August 12, 2014

Fall Orientation
4:30 pm
Banquet Hall

The University, after trying out a number of different learning management systems, has decided to begin piloting a new learning management system called Canvas. Canvas has many features that are not a part of our VSpace. For instance, Canvas has an e-portfolio feature built into the system which allows students the ability to display and discuss any kind of class project. Those students who maintain a log-in with the University can keep this e-portfolio after leaving the University. Canvas has a “speed grader” feature which will allow faculty to view and grade student assignments with either a point scale or a difficult rubric. Also, it is very easy to add multimedia content like YouTube and Twitter to your classes.

During the fall semester, faculty will begin piloting this new system to see if it works with the needs of the University community. We will keep you posted.

Fall 2014 All University Orientation

Planning for the Fall 2014 Orientation has begun. The Orientation will be held on Tuesday, August 12th from 4:30 to 9:00 P.M. As in years past, the evening will begin with a dinner. Deans and Department Chairs will be in attendance. After dinner, faculty will be able to attend three different breakout sessions of their choice. The new adjunct faculty will be automatically enrolled in the Adjunct Faculty Basics 101 session, which will acquaint them with the University’s support services and basic information for negotiating SVSU. It is important that every adjunct faculty member attend this important event. Invitations for this event will be sent in July to your home address. You can register for the Orientation by calling us at 989-964-4050 or going to www.svsu.edu/workshops and registering. Adjunct faculty are compensated \$50 for attending this valuable event.

Syllabus Construction: Part Three

Scaffolding and Assignments

Scaffolding is often described as an “adult controlling those elements of a task that are essentially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence (Wood, Bruner, and Ross, 1976).” This description is supported by the work of Vygotsky (1978) who purported that it is necessary to find the area (zone) between what the student knows and what the student can accomplish if assisted, called the zone of proximal development. So think about that assignment you so carefully crafted only to discover that the students bombed it. Perhaps their failure has to do with the fact that each assignment leads to the next providing a scaffold for learning. If your assignment wasn’t explicitly and intentionally preceded by smaller assignments, your students might not have had the building blocks necessary to complete that well-crafted assignment successfully. Also, it is important to remember that all assignments must link back to those Learning Outcomes discussed in Part One of this series. So, you might ask, how do I accomplish all of this? First, reflect upon and list the learning assignments you have given and the skills that are necessary for students to acquire before beginning each assignment. Then design smaller assignments which will help the student move toward the ability to accomplish your well-crafted assignment. Next, create a curriculum map for how each major assignment is scaffolded. All of this must be done intentionally and it must be done explicitly. Finally, be transparent. Let your students know that you have constructed their learning experiences in such a logical order. This will help them know why you are doing what you are doing and where they are headed with their learning.

- References:
- Caruana, V. (2012) Scaffolding Student Learning: Tips for Getting Started. *Faculty Focus*. Accessed at: <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/instructional-design/scaffolding-student-learning-tips-for-getting-started>
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (J. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds. & Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines*, 17(2), 89–100.

First 4 Weeks

This fall the Office of Adjunct Faculty Support Programs will be offering a new program called First 4 Weeks. This program asks you, as a faculty member, to consider intentionally employing 4 of 26 different strategies in your classroom(s) during the first 4 weeks of the semester. These strategies include ideas for building and encouraging relationships, promoting active and engaging learning, integrating student support into learning experiences, ensuring students understand where they stand, raising expectations and professional challenges. Such strategies have been shown to help create increased student success in the classroom. These strategies can be found on the following page.

Our office is creating a special VSpace open to all faculty who wish to participate in this challenge. Should you choose to participate you will be registered as a participant and your name will be added to the VSpace page where you will be able to access information regarding these 26 strategies. In VSpace, you will be able to add the four strategies you selected and confer with other faculty regarding your successes and also their successes with the strategies. There will be weekly prompts to promote faculty to faculty interaction. At the end we will ask that you assess your successes. Of those who complete their assessment, four participating faculty will be randomly selected to receive a \$26 gift card!

A break-out session at this year’s Orientation will deal specifically with this project and why it is necessary. For more information and to register for this challenge, contact our office at: svsu.edu/adjunctfaculty. You will be notified when your name has been added to the VSpace.

This is important. Our principle role is to help SVSU’s students succeed... so we should do everything we can to make that happen! Join in!

First 4 Weeks

1. Express to your students that you respect them and want all of them to succeed.
2. Learn your students' names and something else interesting about them.
3. 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.
4. Share something about yourself and your passion for your subject content.
5. Ask students to express why they are in college as well as why they are taking your course.
6. 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.
7. Contact any student who misses class.
8. 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.
9. Let students know what they need to do to be successful in YOUR course.
10. Demonstrate how previously successful students have taken notes in your class. Early on assign an exercise that result 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.
11. 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.
12. Engage the class in an academic vocabulary discussion. What constitutes missing class? When is a home assignment late?
13. Perform at least one CAT (Classroom Assessment Technique) – like a minute paper, muddiest point.
14. Engage students in at least one active learning strategy (like think-pair share, QR Code creation, clickers, jigsaws, magic moment, or service learning).
15. Get students actively involved in the content of the syllabus. Consider a syllabus quiz, small group discussion, PollEverywhere.com classroom quiz, etc.
16. 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.
17. Create an exercise that connects students to the campus learning labs/tutoring centers.
18. Create exercises that connect students to student resources like Campus Life, the Library, Counseling and/or Career and Employment Services.
19. Make sure each student has a student handbook. Point out and discuss important topics – like academic integrity—and highlight useful features, for instance a weekly planner, if that is part of your student handbook.
20. Create an assignment that will demonstrate students are able to log into [VSpace](#) and navigate the system.
21. Clearly communicate your course grading policy.
22. Create rubrics that clearly define grading criteria for each assignment and provide these to your students when giving the assignment.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Continue to engage in a strategy (not listed above) that has been successful for you or create a new one! Consider sharing this strategy with your colleagues.