



Adjunct Faculty Academic Calendar

September:

- 4 Last Day to Withdraw with a 100% refund
- 7-8 Labor Day Recess, No Classes
- 9-15 Late Course Adds (ONLY if already registered)
- 15 Last Day to Withdraw with a 75% refund and "W" grade
- 22 Last Day to Withdraw with a 50% refund and "W" grade
- 29 Last Day to Withdraw with a 25% refund and "W" grade

Workshops

(Register at: svsu.edu/workshops)

September:

- 11 What are They Thinking?
SE 203
12:30 p.m.
- 19 Course Design Part 1
SE 203
9:00 a.m.

For more workshops available in September, please visit:
svsu.edu/workshops

What are they thinking?

The Beloit Mindset List for 2019 just came out and it offers a glimpse into what our freshmen know and don't know about the world. For instance, the authors say that today's freshman have never had to lick a stamp and Google has always been available to them as a search tool. Understanding where our freshmen are coming from is interesting and useful but it might be also be interesting to see what they think of the class(es) we teach and how they are learning early on in the semester. The literature on gathering early semester feedback indicates that students are motivated by their faculty member's concern for their learning. It also indicates that gathering early student feedback improves the quality of teaching and can improve the end of semester course evaluations (Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning, 2014).

To gather early student feedback, instructors can simply create a document that asks the students to anonymously respond to the following:

1. What they are learning in the class and discuss any difficulties they might be experiencing with the course material
2. What they happen to like about the course...asking them what is helping them learn
3. Asking them what they don't like about the course and what obstacles are present that are preventing learning
4. Finally, ask them what they think the instructor can do to improve student learning

Once you collect the feedback you should look for trends and ignore the outliers that are overly nice or critical. Next discuss with your students what you found and how you are going to adjust your teaching practices.

This method of gathering student feedback can be an enormous boost to learning how your students learn best and can help you achieve better end of the semester course evaluations.

If you are interested in learning more about "What are they thinking?" register for the workshop by the same name at www.svsu.edu/workshops. It is scheduled for Friday, 11th at 12:30 p.m. in Science East 203. A light lunch will be served and adjunct faculty will be paid \$25 for their time.

References:

Kaneb Center for Teaching and Learning. (2014). *Gathering Early Student Feedback*. University of Notre Dame. Accessed from: <http://kaneb.nd.edu/programs/workshops-we-can-offer/gathering-early-semester-student-feedback/>

McBride, T., R. Nief, & C. Westerberg. (August 2015). Mindset List for the Class 2019. Beloit College. Accessed from <http://www.beloit.edu/mindset/>

It's not too late!

It's not too late to register for the New Adjunct Faculty Seminar. This program is targeted to SVSU's adjunct faculty who have taught three semesters or less. The intent of this program is to provide a mentoring relationship for new faculty as they adapt to the University and its policies and practices. As well, this seminar will provide the participants with an understanding of SVSU's students and methods for effective teaching practices. The seminar will be meet at 4:30 p.m. every other Friday beginning September 4th and end October 30th. If you are interested in participating in the New Adjunct Faculty Seminar, please contact our office by mailing us at adjunctfaculty@svsu.edu or calling us at 989-964-4050. Participants will be compensated \$250 for attending all five sessions.

First Day of Class

by Ann Coburn-Collins

Long ago when I was a student, professors usually began the semester hitting the ground running by launching into lecture rather than discussing the value of the course or the requirements for the course. Later, when I began teaching myself, I used the first class to distribute and review the syllabus and then send the students off to the bookstore feeling that they needed to have their books and other tools before they could begin to think about sociology. Today, as one who has been teaching for 30 years, I have found that the first class is too important to leave simply to a lecture or syllabus review. I have found that the first class sets the tone for the rest of the semester. It is because of this that I work to insure that my first class is given as much time and thought as subsequent classes. The following is a list of some things I have tried over the years to get my students involved in their education from the start. By utilizing these practices I am able to begin each semester by creating a classroom of learners and developing some community among the students and myself.

First, I involve the students from the start. I usually employ some kind of ice-breaker that forces the students to interact with others in the classroom. I have had students work through active learning assignment in teams, interact by having them move about the room to stations marked *agree* or *disagree* in reaction to some topically relevant questions or I have had them individually write a response to some prompt and then pair- share and square their answers to this prompt. By getting the students involved in the class from the beginning you are reinforcing the idea that they are responsible for their learning and that they have to be active in order for this learning to occur.

Secondly, I discuss the subject area for the class and explain why this subject is important and significant to their future. I give a sort of overview of the course explaining what the course is, which subjects are involved in the course and how the course will contribute to their domains of knowledge.

Next, I work to illustrate the expectations for the course. I explain how much time and effort needs to be set aside for each student to be successful in the class. I explain the methods I will use in teaching the course and the expectations I have for their department in the classroom.

In each of these activities I begin to build a rapport with the students. Rapport is essential in building a good student/teacher relationship and it sets the climate for the class. If you want give and take between yourself and your students it is best to begin the semester with activities and behaviors that will establish the sort of climate you desire...whether this climate be relaxed, formal, personal or serious.

Finally, I provide the students with the organizational material for the course. I go over the syllabus, discuss the textbooks, explain where my office is and what my office hours are, etc. I also spend time discussing my classroom policies regarding absences, make-up testing, late papers, etc.

Whatever else you do during the semester try to make sure that you use your first meeting with your students as a means of getting to know them and allowing them to get to know you. If you do so, you will start off on the right foot toward creating a community of learners.