SVSU Saginaw Valley State University

In the Loop

August 2016

The Office of Adjunct Faculty & Academic Support Programs

Adjunct Faculty
Academic Calendar

August:

13 Summer Classes and Final Exams End

17 Summer Grades due to Registrar's Office by noon

29 Fall Classes Begin

Workshops:

10 Canvas an Introduction
9:00 AM, C 150

13 Summer Technology Institute
10:00 AM, SE 201

17 Adjunct Faculty Fall Orientation
4:30 PM, Curtiss Hall Banquet Rooms

30 Introduction to Outlook
1:00 PM, C 150

For a complete list of workshops offered for the Spring/Summer Semesters please visit svsu.edu/workshops

Register for these workshops and more at: svsu.edu/workshops

JumpIn, 2016:
The Fall Adjunct Faculty Orientation

Our office is working to solidify plans for the Fall Adjunct Faculty Orientation scheduled for Wednesday, August 17th. There are many events planned for that day. Canvas training will be offered at 12:30 in Science East 206. Following this, four of the colleges, Business and Management, College of Education, Health and Human Services, and Science, Engineering and Technology are offering times for SVSU adjunct faculty to meet with their deans and chairs to discuss college and departmental updates, assessment, and accreditation. Those not attending a college session are invited to attend a question and answer period with the Programs' Director at 3:30 in Seminar Room F. All of this will be followed by dinner in the Banquet Rooms with the Deans and Chairs and three breakout sessions. This year the focus of the breakout sessions has been intentionally geared to teaching but a session titled, Great Ideas for Teaching (G.I.F.T.), will be offered during the final session so that all faculty who register for this event will be able to learn about the many support programs that are available to them and their students.
If you haven't already registered, please do so by going to https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2887789/JumpIn2016
We look forward to seeing you then!

Summer Technology Institute

In collaboration with Instructional Technology Lab and I.T., our office is hosting the annual Summer Technology Institute. With the adoption of Office 365, there are increased opportunities for faculty to explore novel uses for this software. Additionally, if you haven't yet had the opportunity to be trained on Canvas, this is your chance!

The Summer Technology Institute is being held on Saturday, August 13 from 10:00 to 3:00. The morning will involve Office 365 training and, during the afternoon, we are offering training on Canvas and/or Podium use. Lunch will be served. If you are interested in registering for this valuable workshop, please go to svsu.edu/workshops and enter "Summer" in the search area.

Master Teachers Program

Our new program, the Master Teachers Program, is intended to prepare and advance the teaching practices of SVSU's adjunct faculty. The goals of this program are to help faculty create safe learning environments, become skilled in classroom management, knowledgeable about diverse learning styles, and to develop research based teaching techniques to motivate students.

Anyone interested in this program must first apply. Following acceptance into the program each participant is expected to watch ten online videos produced by Magna publications. The content of each video will then be used by the participants to compose an essay reflecting upon its content followed by the creation of a lesson plan for a class or a personal action that will be implemented in their teaching practices. All of these "assignments" must be submitted to the Program's Canvas space. Finally, classroom observations by the program's director near the beginning of a semester and a classroom observation, by someone in the participant's department, will be required near the end of the semester. For more information on this program please go to the Master Teachers Program link at http://www.svsu.edu/adjunctfaculty/facultydevelopment/

Faculty will be compensated $25.00 for watching each video and completing the assigned work. Once all of the requirements listed above are complete, the adjunct faculty member will receive a $50.00/credit hour bump in pay. Only ten faculty will be admitted into this program each year so don't forget to apply!

New Adjunct Faculty Seminar

If you have been a member of SVSU's adjunct faculty for less than four semesters, you can register for the New Adjunct Faculty Seminar. This Seminar offers an opportunity to help strengthen SVSU's mission of being a premier teaching institution. It is hoped that involvement in this Seminar will help our adjunct faculty grow professionally as teaching scholars and allow them to develop collegial relationships with other new faculty.

The Seminar will be offered at 4:30 in the afternoon every other Friday, beginning on September 9th and ending on November 11th. Adjunct faculty, who register for this program, will be given a book which will help drive the seminar discussions and each will be compensated $250.00 for attending all of the sessions.

If you are interested in enrolling in the New Adjunct Faculty Seminar, please register at www.svsu.edu/workshops.

Importance of Sleep and Student Learning

Our students are often tired. Many live in dorms which offer wonderful learning experiences but may impede the ability of students to get a good night's rest. Being overtired actually prevents the kind of learning necessary for student success. Research has shown that the quantity and quality of sleep affects learning and memory in two important ways. To begin, sleep deprived students have difficulty focusing which prevents them from learning efficiently. Secondly, sleep allows for students' memories to consolidate, an essential element in new learning. So if you can, help your students better manage their time so that they will get enough sleep. It will help them not only get their course work completed but also allow them to better understand and remember the material.

Common Active Learning Mistakes

By now, you are probably aware that active learning is a best practice in undergraduate education and it also qualifies as a high impact practice. However, if your students are accustomed to traditional lecture classes, they might mistake your use of an active learning exercise as a game and not necessarily one that is geared to learning. Felder and Brent, in their book, *Teaching and Learning STEM: A Practical Guide*, describe six common active learning mistakes and offer methods to avoid these mistakes.

Mistakes	Methods to Avoid Mistakes
Plunge into active learning with no explanation	*Set the stage*: first explain what you're going to do and why the active learning exercise is in the students' best interests
Expect all student to eagerly get into groups the first time you ask them to	*Be proactive*: consult with reluctant students in the first few group activities
Make activities trivial	*Create challenging activities*: Make active learning challenging enough to justify the time it takes to do them
Make activities too long, such as assigning an entire problem in a single activity	*Keep activities short*: Activities need to be short and focused (five seconds to three minutes) and break large problems into smaller chunks
Call for volunteers after every activity	*Give every student a chance to debrief:* After some activities, call randomly on individuals or groups to report their results
Fall into a predictable routine	*Don't be predicable*: Vary the formats and lengths of activities and the intervals between them

Set the stage: If you plan to use active learning exercises throughout the semester, begin to do so on the first day. This prepares the students for what to expect as the semester progresses. There typically are some students who resist active learning, so discuss the exercises with your students and let them know the rationale behind engaging in active learning.

Be proactive: Those students who are used to active learning will jump right into the activity, however, those who are not used to such experiences may opt to work alone. Don't be discouraged by this behavior. If some students do opt to work alone, ask them to please work with their group, and they probably will. By the time you have employed active learning exercises three or four times, all students typically are willingly to participate.

Create challenging activities: Make the activity something that is challenging and one which will not make your students feel as though such learning activities are trivial. Students who feel that their time is being wasted might come to resent you and your class.

Keep activities short: It is important to remember that some students struggle more than others. Those who don't struggle might complete an activity in just a few minutes; where those who do struggle, might take up to ten minutes or more and still not be able to solve the problem. To help the latter student, shorter activities (five seconds to three minutes) allow the struggling students to get feedback early so they don't get frustrated.

Give every student a chance to debrief: After completing an activity, it is important to debrief and go over what the students' learned. By throwing out a question during the debriefing and getting volunteer responses, you are only hearing from those students who are more assertive. This then, leaves out the more introverted students who might have a lot to offer but who will just leave it up to others to answer. So call on students randomly allowing all of the students in your class a voice.

Don't be predictable: The key to active learning is to mix things up! You need to vary the kind of work you do in the classroom so that it doesn't become predictable. You can accomplish this by varying the activities, their duration, and the size of the groups.

Active learning is a great tool which helps students succeed. But if it doesn't always work the way you want, take some time to reflect on these suggestions.

Reference:
Felder, R.M., & R. Bret. (2016). *Teaching and Learning STEM: A Practical Guide.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (pp. 111-130).