Classroom Management Tips for New College Instructors By: Mary Bart in Effective Classroom Management, Faculty Development

The sheer volume of content faculty members are responsible for teaching is enormous, but being an effective educator takes much more than the mastery and delivery of material. It requires unique skills and knowledge that most new higher education instructors were never trained in. For newcomers, the challenges can seem overwhelming. In the online seminar 15 Survival Strategies for New College Instructors, Dr. Peter M. Saunders, director of Oregon State University’s Center for Teaching and Learning, outlines 15 effective teaching strategies that address some of the common pitfalls facing new higher education instructors. The Syllabus as a Classroom Management Tool “If you ask me to pick the single most critical issue that new instructors should focus on, it would be classroom management,” says Saunders, “because without a solid management system in place, all the good work one has done preparing for teaching can unravel right before your eyes.” Indeed, for new college educators to survive and flourish, one of the most important things they need to do is consistently establish and manage student expectations and behavior. The syllabus is a way to help accomplish this, Saunders says. Not only is the syllabus an informational tool that answers the key “Who, What, When, Where, Why and How” questions that students have about a class, but it can be transformed into a powerful class management tool that sets clear expectations for workload, learning outcomes, learner behavior and responsibilities, deadlines, grading, late assignments and assessment. “As instructors, we forget just how confusing it is for students who travel from class to class and encounter differences and inconsistencies,” says Saunders, noting that it’s important to not only communicate your expectations but to frame them in such a way that students understand the rationale behind the behaviors you’re requesting. For example, to communicate the expectation of a positive learning environment, the following language is appropriate: “As your instructor and as a student in this class, it is our shared responsibility to develop and maintain a positive learning environment for everyone. Your instructor takes this responsibility very seriously and will inform members of the class if their behavior makes it difficult for him/her to carry out this task. As a fellow learner, you are asked to respect the learning needs of your classmates and assist your instructor to achieve this critical goal.” Effective Teaching Strategies for New Instructors Using the course syllabus as a classroom management tool is just one of the 15 strategies Saunders discusses in the 90-minute seminar, 15 Survival Strategies for New College Instructors. Other strategies for surviving those first couple of years include smart approaches that will help new higher education instructors: Create a safe environment and emphasize time on task Understand when technology should be used and when it should be avoided Motivate learners with the power of peer pressure and peer admiration Integrate teams into small and large classes Provide feedback to student learning without excessive, time-consuming grading “One piece of advice, you can’t integrate all of these at once,” says Saunders. “Integrate them slowly and at the rate that you feel comfortable with them.” - See more at: http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-classroom-management/15-survival-strategies-for-new-college-instructors-2/#sthash.syjoqKjv.dpuf