

# Teaching

*A series of practical and innovative teaching tips for college faculty* No. 2

## The Top 10...

### Ways to Make Your Teaching Life Easier

- ✓ Create a 'hand-in' folder and leave it on the table in front of the class. Tell students to hand in whatever they need to for homework, or in-class assignments at the end of class. Remind them only the first three weeks, after that tell them that is their responsibility. Saves class time.
- ✓ Create a 'hand-back' folder to hand back all student work. Give a large envelope to each student and have them write their name on it. Each week, everything handed back goes into their envelope, for privacy, and the envelopes go into the 'hand-back folder'. Leave the folder in the classroom at least 15 minutes before class starts so students can get their own work. Saves class time.
- ✓ Arrive in class 15 minutes early to talk to students, answer questions on material you have handed back, and 'warm up' everyone, including yourself! Also gives you a chance to make sure everything you need is in the room.
- ✓ Have students "buddy-up" for class notes – perhaps in groups of three. They need to share email addresses and then agree if one misses class, the others will make a copy of class notes to give the person. Keeps students from contacting you for "class notes" if they miss class.
- ✓ Set up any quizzes or weekly homework assignments so that you throw out the lowest grade. If a student happens to miss a class for any reason, that becomes the lowest grade and does not hurt their grade for that part of the course. Saves doing make-ups!
- ✓ Use Blackboard to post the syllabus, assignments, handouts, etc. for the course. Remind students early and often that it is available, and that you will post handouts as you give them out in class, so they can download any given for a class they miss. Saves emails and calls to get lost course material.

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- ✓ Consider posting on Blackboard an “assignment in lieu of cancelled class” and telling students about it (even better note it on the course assignment sheet you hand out to students). In the event that class is cancelled for weather or other reason, students simply go to the course site on Blackboard and do that assignment. That way, you have automatically handled any administrative concern about how you will make up class time.
- ✓ Regularly post announcements on Blackboard and give students an incentive to read (5 points on a weekly quiz, or 10 points on that week’s class assignment). This enables you to communicate easily with the class should the need arise.
- ✓ Take a calendar for the semester and put on it all major assignments, tests, and other activities that will require a lot of your work to complete. After putting all their work on the calendar, add in time for grading, class planning, meeting with students, etc. Spread out the work you must evaluate.
- ✓ Start class on time and end on time – always. Make it clear that you are doing this and have activities at both the beginning and end of class that students must hand in (perhaps in small groups) – that you will NOT give at any other time. Remind students often that this is a major part of their “class participation” grade so that if they come late or leave early, it will hurt their final grade for the course.