

Four Principles for the First Day Checklist

From James M. Lang's "[How to Teach a Good First Day of Class](#)," *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

As you prepare for your first day of class, go through each of the Four Principles to see how you will be addressing them in each of your courses:

1. Curiosity - spark curiosity about the content of the course first, and then demonstrate — with a review of the syllabus — how the course content can help satisfy that curiosity.
2. Community - the intellectual journey you are taking together comes in the form of a caravan, and while you might be the leader, you want all of them to contribute to the learning experiences you will be creating for them.
 - a. Humanize yourself to the students.
 - b. Get students talking to one another.
 - c. Greet each student, if you can.
3. Learning - if you want your students actively engaged in learning throughout the semester, actively engage them in learning on the first day.
 - a. Ask students to try a cognitive task before they are ready.
 - b. Invite students to think about the course from a metacognitive perspective.
4. Expectations - allot at least some time of Day 1 to outlining the parameters of the course beyond subject matter: materials, assessments, policies, key dates and deadlines.