Teaching Tips and Class Management

Be Clear and Explicit.

Include clear and detailed explanations of **expectations** and assignments (include rubrics and models). Explain your pedagogical **rationale** for any **changes** to the calendar, syllabus, or course pacing.

SRIS and Good Teaching.

We know that student evaluations of teaching only tell part of the story about any classroom and instructor. However, students' perceptions matter to committed teachers and can provide a window into how our intentions we may be coming across to them. Connect the language on the Student Rating of Instructor Survey (SRIS) to your own teaching to improve the alignment of teaching and learning. Some examples of how to weave in the evaluation criteria with pedagogical best practices:

- Review "course requirements and grading procedures" regularly. It's a good idea to review this before major assessments. Help students understand what is expected of them.

- Remind students once you have addressed or "met the course objectives published in the course description or syllabus." Help them understand what and *that* they have learned. This can be done at the end or beginning of a class or a unit.

- Help students understand what it means to have a graded assignment or paper returned in a "timely manner" especially in the context of the type or level of class they are in.

- Explain how your approach as well as the values you ascribe to grading or responding impacts the amount of time it might take to return their assignments.

- Explain how you've "organized this class in a way that helped [students] to learn the material."

- Highlight moments that reflect a "good use of class time." Prepare students to make the most of class time, particularly when structuring group-work or collaborative learning exercises. Help them understand the value and rationale behind these pedagogical practices. Be sure to provide them guidance so they do make good use of these modes of learning.

- Be explicit about what and how you've thought about and prepared for the class.

Course Mentor.

Identify a "course mentor" who has taught the course before to guide you through the semester. Syllabi should be on file in your department.

Course Policies and Procedures

You may want to provide guidelines and policies to students regarding a number of issues as a way to provide support and to communicate expectations. The following are a sampling of course-level policies you might use depending on the type and level of course you are teaching.

Guidelines for Language Use.

Provide guidelines for the use of appropriate, non-sexist language, particularly relevant in writing-emphasis and diversity courses. See sample statements below:

- Language Use: Abiding by an anti-discrimination principle means having an awareness of the way language reflects and reinforces certain ideas and assumptions. All writing done for this course must make accommodations for various types of diversity. Mainly, this means that your language must be gender fair, but it also means that your language must not assume the race, ethnicity, disability, status, or sexual orientation of persons for whom this status is unknown or make a point of such status unnecessarily. Check your usage handbook for further information and/or talk with your instructor.

- Guidelines for Nonsexist Language. The American Psychological Association has adopted a policy that requires authors to use nonsexist language. Nonsexist language means that when an individual or a group of individuals is referred to, words are chosen that are accurate, clear, and free from bias. Unless one is referring to a population that is entirely male, words that suggest otherwise are not used. Using the plural is an acceptable way to meet this guideline (assuming, of course, that you are referring to multiple participants). Do not, however, use "they" if you are referring to an individual. Authors should avoid any language that might imply bias against persons on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability, or age. (Adapted from Dept of Psychology Handbook, Missouri Western University.)