WAYS THAT FACULTY CAN HELP FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITION TO COLLEGE

FROM NIAGARA UNIVERSITY'S OFFICE OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT
(SETON HALL, 1ST FLOOR; WWW.NIAGARA.EDU/OAS)

READING

- Some students don’t open a book for weeks. To promote better textbook reading, give a short quiz by the second week. That helps students know very early in the semester how they are doing in your course.
- Explain to students what you do when you read. Show them how you mark your books.
- Stress the importance of looking up unfamiliar words and references. Students may be reluctant to ask you meanings, but skipping over unfamiliar words can compromise their understanding of content.
- Tape yourself reading part of a chapter aloud. Use inflection and emphasis to illustrate what is most important. Students can listen on their MP3 players.
- Assign daily reading questions. Be sure questions can’t be answered by completing only part of the reading. As students enter class, they deposit their answers into a container. If your class is large, pose a question for each reading but only put out the container periodically; don’t tell students when they’ll deposit answers.
- Provide a model of how you expect students to read by highlighting and annotating a few pages of your textbook. This may be a new skill for students who weren’t allowed to write in their high school textbooks. Some students may not have even been allowed to take their textbooks home.
- On your syllabus, list a reading schedule of several pages per day rather than a chapter per week. Breaking up the chapter into smaller chunks may feel more manageable to students.

CLASS NOTES

- If you distribute copies of your PowerPoint slides, stress that the slides are not meant to be a complete set of notes. Provide examples of additional details that you’d expect students to add during your lecture. Or post the slides with a partial outline of your lecture the day before class, omitting some necessary information. Students print the slides and bring to class; the blanks indicate places where they will need to add details.
- Explain to students how to make notes during class discussions, films, and guest speakers.
- Remind students to compare class notes to the textbook and other readings.

STUDY AIDS

- Some first-year students are reluctant to use office hours. Provide an incentive for students to visit you in early in the semester - or require an office visit. Ask students to come with a specific question about the syllabus, the reading, or your lectures.
- Encourage students to form study groups, and explain the benefits. Suggestions for forming a study group are at http://www.niagara.edu/assets/listpage/Study-Groups-student-created.pdf.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Scaffold projects to help students learn to manage their time. High school students often do assignments at the last minute yet still earn good grades. Your students may not have experienced starting a complex project early enough and planning all the necessary steps.
- If you require writing, distribute a scoring rubric so students will know what you expect. Also, provide samples of model papers.

Additional suggestions are at http://www.niagara.edu/reading-resources/ and http://www.niagara.edu/general-study-skills/.

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