



## **Developing a Teaching Persona: Your First Day of Class**

Even the most experienced faculty members sometimes feel anxious about the beginning days of classes. It is during these first few class meetings that routines are established and students begin to form impressions of the course and the instructor. As the professional in the classroom, your demeanor sets the tone for the learning environment. Making intentional decisions regarding how you present yourself to students in the first few class periods can positively affect students' perceptions.

### **Consider these ideas as you prepare for your first days of class:**

1. Professional dress and demeanor convey the message that you are in charge of the space. Dress a little more formally than you might otherwise. Be friendly, but not overly familiar. Greet people as they enter and engage in small talk prior to the start of class.
2. Preparation is key. Organize your materials and practice with the available technology. Some instructors do this by visiting the classroom space well ahead of the first day and performing a test presentation.
3. Prepare your syllabus and discuss it with enthusiasm. Let students know what they need to do to be successful in your course, as well as how to prepare for each day's class period. A well-organized syllabus sends the message that you are prepared and conscientious.
4. Take advantage of the opportunity to set the tone for the course and establish routines for learning. Implement strategies that will be replicated throughout the semester. For instance, if you plan to use short, in-class writing activities, go ahead and include one on the first day.
5. Don't hesitate to use the entire class period on day one. Time is precious, and at the end of the semester, you will be glad you did!

Begin the first day of class on a positive, professional note, and students will look forward to the semester ahead.