

*Advice from veteran FSUS instructors for those who are teaching a first-year seminar for the first time...*

- Have a variety of activities; keep students accountable — i.e. weekly e-mails.
- Give them (students) room to grow — it's like "leading a horse to water."
- Have students do an assignment for a grade each week
- Remember that they have just left high school.
- Utilize FSUS manual — it was very helpful.
- Be patient, allow students to get to know you, and bring occasional treats. Also take time to listen to your students.
- Have students journal – and then read them. You can learn a lot more about your students through journals.
- Have students learn each other's names as quickly as possible.
- Do an outside of the classroom activity early as possible in the term.
- I would say that you need to be flexible, caring, and helpful, but at the same time remind the students that FSUS is for credit and that they need to stay involved in the class.
- Be patient! Learn names quickly — they are impressed by that and are more likely to show up for class when you can identify them. When you see them around campus, speak to them by name.
- Be very structured with grading requirements and schedule — at least 2 individual sessions for "advising."
- Have fun!
- Make it simple on yourself and students. Class attendance is important.
- Relax, enjoy, and get to know your students.
- Use as many resources as you can. Get students to participate.
- Have clear and defined expectations and talk about outcomes. Keep grading simple and don't waiver. Hold the students accountable.
- Send continual reminders about "where to be when" for class activities, etc. Meet with students individually.
- Sit down with another experienced instructor to get some tips/ideas.

- Always provide the students with information they ask about, this is where they learn about Ferris, growing up and developing their own personality

*And from our colleagues at the University of Iowa...*

- Relax' Don't try to cover too much. Rather, give your students time to discuss and share their ideas and experiences with one another.

- You can do it! It seems like a lot of work, but it is rewarding.

- Be strong about classroom policy (no late work, etc.) from the beginning. Attend Friday teacher meetings even when your plan is set — might learn something new! Get to know your students. They need a contact and you might be the only one.

- Be sure to look over all the materials (provided) to see what might be the best fit for use with your unique group of students your teaching strengths/style. Don't be afraid to innovate! Always listen to your intuition about whether or not an exercise/activity would really “fly” in your class!

- Be prepared to be flexible with lesson “presentation”. Accommodate the “moment” and address topics important to students. Have a self reflection early on that is a “free write” so that you get a quick assessment of the emotions and needs of your class and can quickly develop a connection with them

- Focus on getting good discussions going. Don't worry about what you need to teach. Students learn from hearing what their classmates think or how they've solved a problem.

- I'd suggest having a “mentor” who's a veteran of a couple of years or more. I had lots of help around but others might not.

- Do not be discouraged by your impressions based on how your students look. They are not as “frozen” as they appear. Do ice-breakers early and often. The more they get to know each other the more they will participate in class. Make notes about their writing and conversations so you can remember details about their personal life from their journals.

- In every class always have a “back up” plan. Not all prepared lessons plans are as well received as you may have intended. Spontaneity can be your “friend”.

- Hang in there. Some lesson plans don't go over well, and it's easy to become discouraged. Every section has up weeks and down weeks, often because of what students are dealing with outside of your classroom.

- Always have a Plan B or one extra activity. Don't be afraid to go with the flow if something comes up in class. Show your students you like them!

- Come in with a lesson plan, but keep open to changes in the class. Sometimes moving off “topic” can really open a discussion that helps the students connect with you and the class.

- Review the course content...be sure you are comfortable teaching/presenting every area required. Ask for help when you need it. Breathe!
- Get to know the students and help them know each other. Take photos of them on the first day. Enjoy them. Relax...the content is important but your presence in their lives is more so. Go to the weekly staff mtgs. - they're y helpful.
- Be flexible — Don't be confused by the amount of material to be covered. Let the topics flow or spill over to next period if needed.
- Read through the manual when you receive it, to become familiar with topics and available materials. However, don't be afraid to bring in your ideas — you'll teach best what is of interest to you.
- Review the material prior to preparing the syllabus. This way you will know what the students will be doing each week and you can arrange topics accordingly. Be sure to read everything you expect the students to read.
- Attend the training sessions: They were very helpful.
- Take 10 minutes after each class period to note what went well, what didn't, and possible changes for next time. If a student appears "off" one day, but you don't have the opportunity to talk privately before or after class, drop them a quick "just checking in" email. You might be surprised how appreciated it is.
- Attend weekly instructor meetings — they are a great way to get input and stay on top of current issues. Be intentional about getting assignments back on time. Have fun! You will learn and grow from this experience as much, if not more, than your students. At the end, create a portfolio to document your hard work.

*(Thanks go to Andrew Cinoman, Brian Corkery, and Pat Folsom from the University of Iowa for sharing these snippets of advice from their veteran FYE instructors.)*