

Coping with a Diversity of Abilities and Interests in the Classroom

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Outline

- Introduction
- Think, Plan, Set Goals
- Learning Styles
- Learning Skills
- Handling Questions
- Help Students Accept Challenges
- Second Chances
- Further Discussion

Think, Plan, Set Goals

- Be aware of the problem
- What level to pitch the course?
- What does the catalog say? former instructors?
- Plan a strategy to handle the problem
- Set Goals for the course & let students know!
- Help students raise their expectations for themselves!

Learning Styles

- Teaching and learning are individual skills – what works for you is probably not the same as what works for your colleague down the hall or all of the students in your class
- Nothing works with all your students – you will fail to connect with some of them BUT use multiple approaches to try to connect with all at least some of every class
- No matter what the level of sophistication of the entering students, we want them all to leave changed, with broader and deeper knowledge and experience
- Classical learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Tactile

Learning Skills

- What skills do students need?
- Note taking
- Reading
- Communications
 - Writing
 - Listening
 - Asking good questions

Handling Questions

- Welcome questions, don't put people down!
- Become practiced at planning strategy after hearing question:
 - put off
 - short answer
 - long answer
 - add to question (which can help students learn to formulate questions)
- Asking questions
- Rhetorical questions? Critical pause

Help Students Accept Challenges

- Expect more from your students & praise them for achievement
- A-List Problems
- Extra Credit Homework
- The 'Interesting' Problem (e.g. the Goat Problem)
- Email availability

Second Chances

- Expect more from your students & praise them for achievement
- Gateway (Mastery) Tests
- Extra Credit Homework
- First Drafts
- Second Chances
- That Question, Again?
- Email availability
- Required Office Hours

Further Discussion