Activity: “First Day of Class” Transcript

If someone told you to type out everything you were going to say on the first day of class, what would you say? That they were nuts, right? Well, the surprising thing is that creating a transcript is remarkably helpful. And NOT because you will be reading it out loud in discussion. But here are the benefits:

1. You are forced to figure out the list of activities you want to cover on the first day.
2. You discover all the supplies you will need to do those activities, and can make a list.
3. When you write out the words, you get a good idea of how long each item will take.
4. When you see the whole list of activities you want to cover during the 50 minutes, you can rearrange the order until you like the flow.

I’ve attached a sample of the first five minutes of my first discussion to give you a sense of how one looks. Create one of your own using a similar format. It should contain:

1. A quick-overview abstract of your entire discussion, including the time needed for each activity.
2. A list of materials needed (dry-erase markers, poster paper, index cards, etc)
3. Setup instructions. What to write on the board, what to have on student desks, what handouts to bring, what to email the night before to your students.
4. Transcript of your words and actions. Yes, type out “Hi, my name is ___. Remember, you won’t be reading it out loud in class.
5. Indicators of time as you type out the transcript

Sample First Day of Class Transcript

Abstract:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-class prep (create transcript, write on board)</td>
<td>30 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have students fill out cards</td>
<td>(before class starts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icebreaker (group discuss, 5 presentations)</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syllabus overview</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short worksheet</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Materials needed: Flip chart paper, pens, dry erase markers, blank index cards for each participant.

Before first class:

1. Write on board this information:

   Please fill out index card:
   
   Name:
   Call me/ how to pronounce my name:
   Student ID:

   Dr. Williams
   Discussion B13: 05203
   eee.uci.edu/06f/05203
   Lecture B only!
During class:
(2 min) Start: Welcome! My name is Dr. Williams, and you have made it to your first discussion section for Bio 93, your first biology class here at UCI. As you came in the classroom, you found an index card on your desk, and instructions on filling it out here on the board. Please finish that up as I make this announcement.

The first thing I need to do is make sure you found the right room. The classroom right next to this one also hosts Bio93 discussion sections, and we always manage to mix up students on the first day. The course code for this section is 05203, so your schedule should have that number. And all of you should be signed up for Bio 93’s lecture B, which meets at 12 noon. If your lecture is at a different time, like 1 pm, you are now free to go next door where a very nice man named Dr. Bialeky wants to meet you. (pause for shuffle)

Okay, hi again. Our normal procedure in discussion will be to work on better understanding some of the concepts of Bio 93. But this isn’t a gigantic lecture, it’s a more intimate group of 30 students. So I want you to get to know the people in here, because there is a good chance you might meet someone who would be good to study with.

(5 min) So right now, please turn your desks around and get into groups of three. Yes, right now. Go on! Good job.

Now take a few minutes and learn something about each person in your group. Maybe you went to rival high schools. Maybe you are interested in the same club. Find out each other’s names, and one thing you have in common with each one. The two topics you CANNOT ask are “what is your major” or “what do you want to do after college.” Ready? Go!

Okay? Now I’m going to see how well you did. I’ve got five packs of candy here. Raise your hand if you remember the names of the two people you met. (wait) Okay, what were their names, and what did you have in common with them? (listen, comment) Good! Here’s your candy. Someone else? (continue until candy is gone). Good job! Pass in your index cards, and I’ll tell you a bit about myself.

I did my undergraduate work at UC Davis a long time ago. I did my masters work at CSU Fresno, and got my Ph.D. here at UCI in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. I’m married, and have a 9 year old daughter, and we live here in Irvine. This is my sixth year at UCI. I’m not hired as a professor like your teachers in lecture, so you can call me Dr. Williams, but not Professor Williams. I teach occasionally, but my main job is training graduate students and new lecturers how to teach discussion sections.

Now, let’s go over the syllabus....