It’s Hot Outside, But Your Students May Still Need a Warm-Up

We frequently feel that our students are unprepared or unaware of what it takes to be successful in our courses. Faculty have limited time to cover the course material, so what are the opportunities to get students up to speed and prepared for a successful semester? Having students do some online pre-course work the first week can start the class off on the right foot.

Here are some tips for creating a Warm-Up Module in Blackboard.

1. Share course expectations.
   - What do successful students do in your course?
   - What are the things that are most challenging?
   - What advice would a past student give to a future student?
   - What do they need to know about readings, attendance, notes, and grades?
   - Give examples of good, acceptable, and unacceptable work.

2. Check student preparedness.
   - Give an ungraded blackboard quiz to let students test their own knowledge.
   - Tell students how they can beef up their knowledge or skills in any areas of weakness (Khan lectures, merlot courses, PDFs, readings, writing center). Be specific!

3. Have students write a goal essay.
   - Ask students to share their goal for the course.
   - Ask them how they will accomplish it.
   - Ask them what they will do if they face challenge.

4. Create online groups and have students introduce themselves on a group discussion board.
   - Groups provide the basis for a study group.
   - Groups provide support when things get hard.

5. Make a connection.
   - Create an “About Me” page that introduces you.
   - Let students know the best ways to contact you.
   - Offer up a discussion board that allows students to ask you questions.

When designing your module:
- Use an action oriented title to your module like “Start Here!” or “Open Now!”
- Let students know what the module does and why it’s important to their success.
- Give points for completing the module to ensure that students take it seriously.
- Keep a positive tone to let students know that you are ready to help them succeed.

Need some help creating your warm-up module?
Contact us for a one-on-one consultation!

Dr. Shelley Howell
Teaching and Learning Consultant
Shelley.howell@utsa.edu
210-458-6778