Coping with a Diversity of Abilities and Interests in the Classroom

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Math & Teaching Seminar, January 26, 2011
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