



INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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HOW READY ARE YOU?

As a new semester approaches, the pace and excitement level on any campus increases palpably! Our thoughts turn to new ways of helping students learn, writing syllabi and exams, and grading papers. We look forward to meeting new and eager minds. With outlines in hand, most instructors feel prepared and ready for the new academic year. Do you?

Undergraduate educators are authorities in their specific disciplines; but in today's environment, classroom instructors also need to know how to deal with emergencies that can occur. For too many of us, preparedness is associated with lecture notes and handout copies rather than crisis. Medical emergencies can (and do) occur in classrooms! Some may be emotional emergencies, such as the announcement of a suicide or the accidental death of a classmate. Others may be violent, occurring outside the classroom (assaults, abuse, threats, or vandalism) or on school grounds. Unfortunately, in this day of road rage and air rage, we must be aware of the potential for violence within our classrooms. Are you ready? Here's a checklist!

1. Before I leave for my first day of class, I leave my schedule with a family member. I include specific information about the times and meeting places for each of my courses and how to reach me in an emergency.
2. For each classroom/lab where I will be teaching, I know the location of the closest emergency phone, how to use it, and what type or level of response it brings.
3. For each classroom/lab where I will be teaching, I know the location of the closest first aid equipment and how to use it.
4. If I am teaching in a lab, I know the location and proper use of each item of safety equipment and have checked each piece to be sure it is in working order.
5. During the first class meeting, I discuss or demonstrate for the students any procedures for emergencies.
6. I provide written instructions for any safety procedure I expect the student to follow and include assessment of this material in my testing procedures.
7. For each room where I teach, I know and communicate to my students at least two routes for emergency exit.
8. If I have a disabled student with a mobility impairment, I have pre-planned assistance and identified the fastest exit route with him or her.
9. For each section/course I teach, I establish and communicate to my students a gathering place where we would meet in the event that we must leave the building quickly.
10. In planning an outside meeting place, I know how far from the building we should gather (based on college policy or local codes) to be safe.
11. I know the name of the public information officer and campus procedures for dealing with media in the event of a fire or other emergency.
12. In the event of a building evacuation, I know how I would receive clearance to re-enter or to dismiss.
13. I am trained in CPR and/or first-aid and could help in a crisis.
14. I recognize and am alert for comments or



behaviors in class that might suggest a substance abuse problem.

- _____ 15. I recognize and am alert for comments or behaviors in class that might suggest an emotional crisis.
- _____ 16. I know what campus offices or individuals I should notify/contact if a student exhibits behaviors that impede the progress of a class session.
- _____ 17. I know what campus offices or individuals I should notify/contact if a student voices difficulty with a personal issue, unrelated to the course (illness, divorce, job termination).
- _____ 18. I know at least one member of the college's health services staff by name to make a contact or referral for a student having problems.
- _____ 19. I know at least one member of the college's counseling staff by name to make a referral of a student having problems or to confer about classroom management issues.
- _____ 20. I have received training in conflict resolution, negotiation, or crisis intervention.

We cannot prepare for all emergencies. However, we can learn about those that are most common on our own campus and prepare for them. If you aren't comfortable with any of these readiness indicators, talk with someone who has knowledge or responsibility in that area! If you aren't sure where to start, consider contacting supervisors or the office overseeing public safety.

We tell students to be thoroughly prepared for each test we give. If an emergency situation tests us, we should be ready. On this test, the outcome measurement might be a student's life!

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