0.1 Highly recommended procedures

Before getting into specifics of classroom technique, here are a few simple procedures that make a large difference.

- *Nametags.* Have the students wear nametags each day until you know their names (in my case 2 or 3 weeks). When calling on students, call on them by name and in general attempt to use their names frequently. This serves two purposes. First, by attempting to learn their names, you create a separate mental category for each student, which helps you pay attention to how each student is doing and to their individual needs. Secondly, there seems to be a psychological advantage to students hearing their names. Coming around to a small group and asking "Amy, can you tell me what progress your group has made?" or asking in a large group discussion whether "Sam's objection to Cindy's idea" holds water elicits more of a response than the same questions without the names identified. Somehow, students are more prone to take their own beliefs seriously when names are attached.
- *Randomize groups.* I usually assign groups using playing cards randomly dealt: all the aces for a group, the twos form another, and so on. I re-form groups twice or thrice during the semester. Preventing students from choosing their buddies for a group helps them form connections, subject their ideas to the intellectual marketplace, and treat all the others in their groups fairly. The playing cards themselves lend an air of intrigue as students await the results of the lottery.
- *Get enough sleep.* Alertness is required on the part of the instructor. You'd be surprised what a difference this makes. You can fake it when you're lecturing, but try playing moderator when you can't concentrate or respond quickly, and you'll see what I mean.
- *Start the semester with a bang.* That is, don't spend the first day on administrative stuff and the second on some kind of review. Jump into an absorbing problem on Day

1, preferably a tried-and-true chestnut, and fill in the administrative details later, when they've gotten the idea of what the class will be about. The tone of the first day's discussion sets an example that's hard to erase, so make sure it is as lively as possible.

- *Be yourself* at least up to a point. If you're the goofy type, be goofy, if you're serious and intense, let them feel the intensity, if you're understated and direct, be that way. You are on stage, and want to use your charisma, but don't pretend to be someone you're not.