A summary of Teaching Unprepared Students: Strategies for Promoting Success and Retention in Higher Education by Kathleen F. Gabriel

Underlying philosophy: the seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education outlined by Chickering and Gamson:
1. Encourage contacts between students and faculty.
2. Develop reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Use active learning techniques.
4. Give prompt feedback.
5. Emphasize time on task.
6. Communicate high expectations.
7. Respect diverse talents and ways of learning

Principles:
1. All students can become lifelong learners and can be successful
2. Change requires commitment and time on the part of faculty and students
3. Struggle is necessary
4. Students must accept responsibility for their learning progress and be held accountable
5. Never do for students what they should do for themselves – show them how to be self-reliant, to use resources

If no SLOs written, take Angelo and Cross' Teaching Goals Inventory p. 20-22 in CATS or www.fm.iowa.uiowa.edu/fmi/xsl/tgi

The First Week:
Detailed syllabus, especially your policy on attendance and tardiness
Individual office hour meetings several times a semester
Students write goals for class on 3x5 cards
Diagnostic activity the first day (write a paragraph or response to a reading)
Prognosis inventory (Appendix B)
Give a quiz on the syllabus (groups of 3 compare answers)

Consistent Contact:
Promote class attendance:
1. Learn students' names (take photos, nameplates, name game, tape 1-minute interviews)
2. Help students learn classmates' names (icebreakers) p. 48-49
3. Require a respectful class atmosphere
4. Have a positive attitude toward students and enthusiasm for the subject
5. Use interactive activities (talk, write, relate to past experiences, apply to life)
6. Take roll and speak to students the first time they have more than one absence
7. Define "readiness to learn": Example: "Learning is not a spectator sport. Fundamentally, the responsibility to learn is yours and yours alone. For learning to happen in any course, you must take an active role in the process. For our class, you are expected to come to class '**prepared**' and '**ready to learn**,' which requires you '**to read**' and '**to study**' the assigned reading '**before**' you come to class. Being prepared for class enables you to construct a knowledge base on which subsequent learning rests.
8. Give class participation points: Example: "Class activity points are earned during class time. At every class meeting, we will have meaningful educational activities that will help you grasp the course content; therefore, it is important to make every effort not to be absent. Class activity points cannot be made up, so if you have to be absent more than twice, your final grade will be affected. I expect you to come to class prepared with all reading and other assignments completed. Just being in class does not guarantee you any class activity points. I expect everyone to contribute to and participate in all class activities."

Learning Styles – help students be responsible for their own learning
Have a variety of assessments, such as projects, portfolios, presentations -- not just tests
Use rubrics
Take the learning styles inventory as a homework assignment –
www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html and www.ulc.arizona.edu/learning_style.php and
www.vark-learn.com/english/index.asp
Share with students research on how people learn (see Halpern and Hakels "Applying the
Science of Learning" 2003), for example, that learning depends on prior knowledge and
experience and is reinforced by re-representing information in alternative formats.

Promote Deep Learning (as opposed to surface learning, memorization, repetition
1. Create concept maps or outlines to show relationships
2. Organize new information into meaningful patterns
3. Add details and information that connects new information to prior knowledge

Embrace learner-centered education:
Make students members of a community of learners who make discoveries and solve problems
Students set ground rules for attendance, behavior (don't ignore bad behavior)
Assess prior knowledge (CATS Background Knowledge Probe, Misconception/Preconception
Check)
Mix groups so students interact with different classmates

Interweave assessment:
Students are more motivated when we demonstrate interest in their progress
Use formative assessments (feedback on drafts, work in progress, practice tests), not just
summative assessments (midterms, finals) and adjust teaching based on feedback
Use iclickers or colored 3x5 cards to ask questions on the material. If there is disagreement,
students discuss and convince the rest of the group of the right answer. Then ask them again.
Metacognitive moment (groups of three decide on an answer; write yes if all agree, no if not)
Examples – solo/pair/share every 15 minutes, minute paper, muddiest point, memory matrix
(CATS p. 142), What's the Principle? (CATS p. 218), Pro and Con Grid (CATS p. 168)

Two major obstacles students have:
Lack of study strategies
Inability to differentiate between essential and non-essential information

Promote academic integrity:
Don't grade on a curve
Give point values and percentages (easy to calculate)
Use rubrics so students know what's expected
Give plagiarism mini-lessons, tutorials online (library?)
www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html
Plagiarism Court www.fairfield.edu/x13870.html
It's Your Call http://skil.stanford.edu/module6/paraphrasing.html

Universal Design for Instruction model:
Structure long-term projects to provide step-by-step feedback along the way
Offer tutorials, resources, one-on-one help (contact kgabriel@u.arizona.edu for booklet/lessons)
Appendix D Learn the Lingo: A Strategy for Building a Better Vocabulary (3x5 cards – word on
front, on back: p. where word appears, part of speech, pronunciation, definition, illustration)
Appendix B – performance prognosis inventory