Step 1: Identify A Bottleneck

What is your bottleneck?

1) Identify a specific moment in your course in which your students face a learning bottleneck (i.e. something that is essential for their success but which semester after semester large numbers of students fail to grasp).

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2) Describe as precisely as you can what they are getting wrong. (What is the nature of the bottleneck?)

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Here are examples of productive and unproductive ways to approach the Assignment. Note—the more specific you can be, the better:

1. English
Vague bottleneck: Students cannot interpret texts.
Useful: "Students in literature classes have a particular problem in the basic approach to textual interpretation. Students forever want to go directly to interpreting a text without first getting a good grasp of a text's content. They need to observe before they interpret, but they are constantly skipping a thoughtful observation stage. Skipping this stage leads to poor interpretations." (This observation is specific enough and provides enough information that it can serve as a starting place for the analysis of the bottleneck.) - Gutjahr, 2004

2. Biology
Vague bottleneck: Students have difficulty moving from fact learning to a deeper understanding of biological processes
Useful: Students have difficulty visualizing chromosomes, appreciating the distinction between similar and identical chromosomes (i.e., homologs and sister chromatids), and predicting their segregation patterns during mitosis and meiosis. -Strome, 2004