
Participate and Belong

Students want to be a part of a learning community.

Practice Presence

- Move around the classroom; proximity also works
- Do not talk and write at the same time
- Learn your students' names

When online,

- Let students know when and how to contact you with questions
- Send a message to students who are not participating based on your gradebook or logs
- Create short (1-5 minute) videos to introduce each week. Only audio works!

Experience is Powerful

Relate course material to the rich, lived experiences of your students

- Use personal anecdotes from your past; this makes your assignment relevant
- Use course metaphors to represent difficult content
- Establish tone: Use music or visual aids to stimulate the senses and build a unique environment

Promote Engagement Inside and Outside the College

- Require at least one office-hours visit, which can be in a group
- Require or encourage students to seek regular advising, internships, and networking with faculty
- Include university support services in the syllabus

Communicate and Perform

Your syllabus is a first chance to unpack hidden curriculum. Assignment directions can be clear with the purpose, tasks, and requirements listed.

Be Crystal Clear in Your Course Syllabus

- Write student learning outcomes (objectives) for students, not experts
- Connect course activities in your syllabus to course goals
- Use simple, friendly language in your instructions

Show Your Subject Matter Organization

- Use a diagram or concept map to show how knowledge is organized in your discipline
- Tell students what your discipline values. (E.g. clarity, ingenuity, or detail?).
- Explain to students how to read writing from your discipline.

Reach Out with Facilitation

- Review the previous week, outline your lecture, and recap each session.
- Check for understanding (one-minute papers, pair and share, cold calling, clickers) often.
- Provide prompts and use sample assignments for all new material.

Foster Self-Awareness

- Teach students how to take notes. Provide your notes as a model.
- Share study skills that worked for you when you were a student. This really works for struggling students.
- Ask students to set a learning goal for a personal connection to the material.
- Use reflection, verbalizing, or tracking performance to help students think about how they approach assignments and tests

Ask and Receive Feedback

Students will tell you what they have learned and you can adjust teaching if they have not.

Structure Feedback into Your Assignments

- Specify your criteria for grading.
- Include examples of past student work so students can see that there are different ways to complete the assignment.
- Add a low-stakes formative assessment before any important assignment or test.

Give Prompt Feedback

- Praise student work and effort, not intelligence. Students who believe they can get better with hard work, perform better.
- Provide feedback with an eye to student performance on a major paper or project
- Practice two-way feedback in class using ungraded reflection--e.g. one minute papers, exam wrappers, clickers or polling.

Let Students Practice in Class

Your course can be used as practice for behaviors praised in your discipline and in college in general. Incorporate these into your lesson plans.

- Ask students read aloud, write, or ask better questions on a regular basis if you want to build critical thinking.
- Ask students practice hard stuff in class. They will get better at the thing you want them to learn and you will see if they are learning.
- Structure all group and practice activities using defined role and clear prompts; unskilled group work hurts learning.