Learn about Your Students

There are strategies that you can use to learn who your students are, what they want and their goals, as well as what they know, to promote engagement, interaction, learning, and an inclusive classroom environment.

By finding out more about your students, in particular their motivations, and why they are taking your class, you can better engage your students and help them find a sense of purpose (Lizzio, 2006).

Distribute a questionnaire via email or through eClass before or on the first day of class, with the possibility of follow-ups throughout the term.

- Get email addresses of your students from your classlist if you wish to send a direct message before class starts.
- Alternatively, there are a variety of tools on Moodle/eClass (feedback, discussion forum, questionnaire, etc.) to help facilitate this process before, during, or after the first class.
- If you wish for this to be an opening activity during class for students to learn about each other, you can use Microsoft Forms free at York. Consider how everyone can participate, e.g. can every student bring an electronic device to class? Can you offer alternatives?
- Alternatively, summarize the anonymized results you receive and present in class.

Design and facilitate introductory activities for everyone in the class to meet, get to know one another, and interact.

Engage students in goal setting to help them identify what they find motivating, want to accomplish or work on. Then support students in the process of meeting their goals by promoting individual and collective reflection.

Learn what your students know, that is, their prior knowledge, skills, values, and experiences, through pre-assessments or Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

- By asking students what they already know or can do related to a topic, concept, skill, etc. that they are meant to learn, you can determine the appropriate level needed for your students to be able to access the lesson.
- Pre-assessments and CATs don't have to take too much time and can be embedded within your lesson plans.
- Providing students with the opportunity to connect previously learned material to new material in your course will build student confidence and sense of capability (Lizzio, 2006).

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Lizzio, A. (2006). Designing an orientation and transition strategy for commencing students. A conceptual summary of research and practice. *First Year Experience Project*. Griffith University.