



Inclusive Teaching: The First Day of Class

Creating a sense of belonging is critical for student learning and setting the tone for an inclusive classroom begins on, or even before, the first day of class. This handout provides sample questions for a questionnaire you can use to get to know students, a few considerations for your own introduction as an instructor, and suggestions for introducing your course.

Surveys: Getting to know your Students

Questionnaires can be an effective way to get to know your students and to give students an opportunity to share something about themselves. An alternative might be to ask students to write a letter in which they introduce themselves to the instructor, and the instructor would also share a letter with their students.

Sample Intro Text

Welcome to xxx! I'm excited you decided to learn xxx, and I look forward to having you in class this semester. I would like to get to know you a bit better, so I can make this a meaningful and interesting experience for all students in this course. Please answer the questions below and feel free to share any additional information that you would like me to know.

Sample Questions – About the Student:

- What is your name? Would you prefer to be called a different name in this course?
- What pronouns would you like me to use?
- What would you like to share about yourself?
- What should I know about you to support your learning experience in this course?
- Do you have a career goal in mind at this point?
- What is your greatest strength?

Sample Questions – About their Learning Experience

- What is your standing? First-year, sophomore, junior, senior, fifth-year, other
- What is your declared or intended major?
- What has been your favorite course? What made it such a good experience for you?
- What study strategies do you anticipate to use for this course?
- What is something you would like to learn in this course?
- What should this class be like to give you a meaningful learning experience?
- What challenges do you anticipate in this course?

Sample Questions – About their Subject/Discipline Experience and Knowledge

- Have you taken/are you currently taking other (history/math/German) classes?
- Why did you decide to register for this course? Do you have a specific interest?

When you think of xxx, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

How comfortable do you feel with the concept of xxx?

I've heard of it

I can recall some information about it

I can explain it

Do you have any research experience, e.g., have you worked in a lab, conducted field work, collected data, written a literature review, published a paper?

Additional:

What would you like to know about me?

What would you like to know about my approach to teaching?

What would you like to know about this course?

You can also consider assessing students' [prior knowledge](#) using tools such as self-assessments, concept-maps, or classroom assessment techniques.

Introducing Yourself

To create a sense of belonging, consider sharing some information about yourself. Students might be curious to learn more about your journey to the profession or surprised to hear about your passion for beekeeping.

About Me (how to pronounce my name, things I enjoy doing, etc.)

My interest in this field (what caught my interest, how my interest deepened/changed over time)

My own experience as a student (what was hard, engaging, fun)

My professional journey

My approach to well-being

What you can expect from me/how I will support you in this course

A few words about how we might communicate in this course

Take a look at this [PowerPoint template](#) for "getting to know your prof"

Introducing the Course Content

Drawing students into the material can support their academic engagement. Consider ways in which students can connect their experiences and interest to course and disciplinary content.

- Share with students what excites/interests you most about this course and ask them about their interest in the topic.
- Pose a big question about the content of the course to show its relevance beyond the classroom.
- Pose a question that makes students think about their personal experience in relation to the course.

