

Questions to Engage & Connect with Students*

Ask students to respond to the following questions on the last day of the week at the end of class. Note that students need to know that every comment is confidential and not evaluative.

On the first day of class in the following week, summarize students' responses. At the end of the term, ask students to do a thematic analysis of the responses.

1. At what moment were you most engaged as a learner?
2. At what moment were you most distanced as a learner?
3. What action was most helpful?
4. What action was most puzzling or confusing?
5. What surprised you?

Students leave their responses by the door as they exit the classroom.

This technique was developed by Stephen Brookfield, author of *Becoming A Critically Reflective Teacher* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass 1995). Brookfield's name for this is "Critical Incident Questionnaire." He did not start using this questionnaire until after he had been teaching for 20 years. He notes that early in the term, some students test instructor's who use this strategy by providing particularly negative comments. They are testing whether there will be punitive consequences to their comments. When negative comments produce no repercussions, the students learn to trust the instructor, they take their role more seriously and provide more useful comments.

* From Stephen Brookfield (2002) "Looking at Your Teaching through Different Lenses: Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher," Quarterly Forum on Teaching and Learning, 1/23/2002, University of Washington, Seattle.