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Survey for Rapport

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Best Teaching Practices Expo 2021

Teaching Practice & the Need it Addresses

I've found a survey questionnaire at the start of the semester (and as a check-in during the course) to be a successful way to build rapport, in addition to having students introduce themselves in class. I've done this both in hard copy and via WebCampus and asked students about their preferred names & pronouns, motivations, past learning experiences, hobbies, and even about housing and food insecurity. This serves a few key purposes: 1. It allows me to get to know students beyond a few words of introduction and more in-depth than they may like to share in front of their peers, especially when addressing more personal topics. 2. It gives students another way to communicate with me about their backgrounds, preferences, and needs and makes them feel cared for as people. 3. It allows me to learn about patterns within the classroom to guide the curriculum/activities.

How Others Can Adopt This Practice

This is very adaptable for any class. Even if there is not much flexibility within course content, getting to know students more deeply (and giving students another way to connect with their instructor) is valuable in creating rapport from the beginning of the semester, and this doesn't require much time to set up. I would propose a basic template (see Resources for samples) that can be adjusted for each course or instructor. This can be given to students as a hard copy to fill out during class, or as a simply online assignment, and it can be as short or long as time and review allow.

Survey for Rapport

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Resources and Where to Find Them

- [Sample Survey Template #1](#) (Used for Fall 2019)
- [Sample Survey Template #2](#) (Used for Fall 2020, adjusted from #1)
- [Sample Survey Template #3](#) (Used mid-semester Fall 2020)
- Consider what's been useful to know about students in the past
- Consider what students have shared in the past that have influenced their performance or involvement in class
- Consider where in the course there is flexibility for student preference & needs
- Collaborate with veteran faculty

Contact Me

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Evidence it Benefits Students

Sample student feedback:

- "I love that you ask this question:)" (in regards to asking pronouns & if it's ok to use them in class)
- "I am just excited for this class because it seems like a good environment."
- "I do just want to thank you in advance for teaching during all of the stuff going on in the world right now and being so understanding and welcoming in your class. It's very comforting and I can't wait for the rest of the semester!"
- "I love participating in this class!"
- "Thank you for treating us so well!! At the beginning of the semester I was very anxious about how online college would be, but I am very glad to have had you as an instructor. You made this semester 20 times better."
- "Very interactive with students, understood challenges that we faced due to remote learning." (from course evaluation)

Sample student responses used to shape course delivery:

- "I am a visual learner and I learn best by taking notes or watching videos."
- "I am diagnosed with social anxiety, so a lot of public speaking amongst people I don't know makes me shake and nervous and much harder to speak."
- "I learn best by class/group discussion."

Instructor perspective:

- Having a more in-depth background about each student allows me to quickly learn names and get to know students as individuals
- Having a sense of students' backgrounds, plans, goals, preferences, and experiences allows me to tailor the content, assignments, and pacing
- Several students disclosed difficult/personal situations (even about other classes) because they felt comfortable with me