



WELCOMING STUDENTS TO YOUR COURSE

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Purpose

This job aid highlights some things that instructors can do to welcome students to their courses whether they are using a face-to-face, blended, or online model.

Background

No matter the classroom model, it is important to create a supportive and welcoming environment to enable student learning (Pandolpho, 2019).

How To

Introduce Yourself

Introducing yourself to student helps you to establish yourself as a holistic person (*First Day of Class | Center for Teaching | Vanderbilt University, n.d.*). If you have a face-to-face class spend some time introducing yourself to students but also include an instructor introduction on the Moodle page (either a video or document). An instructor profile is included in the Moodle Minimum presence standards for all courses whether online, blended, or in person. Some things that you may consider sharing include:

- Personal biography – share aspects of your background that you are comfortable sharing. This could include: family, pets, and hobbies and interests.
- Professional and Academic Biography – what certificates, diplomas, or degrees you have as well as professional experience.
- Teaching biography- how long you have taught, what courses and programs you normally teach

Note – for all of these, just share what you are comfortable sharing. Consider where your personal boundaries are and what you want your students to know about you.

Send a Welcome to Class E-mail

Sending a ‘Welcome to class’ e-mail either shortly before or the first day of the term can be an important step for you creating a positive first impression with students and is a first step in creating a positive rapport with students (Brown, 2019). This strategy is helpful for students whether the class is face-to-face, blended, or online. The contents of the message may differ depending on your course delivery format but the welcome message will act to set a positive tone for the course and let students know what to expect from the course and from you. As a starting point, the e-mail should include:

- a warm greeting and brief instruction from you their instructor;
- an introduction to the course and how it connects to the program and their future roles in industry;

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- an outline of the course format and the expectations of them as students. IE face-to-face class time and out of class engagement expectations;
- let them know about any textbook or other materials (calculator, tools, lab equipment, special clothing or PPE) which will be necessary for them to engage in the course;
- your contact information and expected timeframe for response; and
- instructions on how and why to connect with their Student Success advisor.

Classroom Expectations and Routines

It is important for students to understand what is expected of them as students in your class whether you have a face-to-face or online modality. The Moodle Minimum Presence Standards state that instructors should “Outline expectations for interaction, including professionalism, class guidelines, and timing and frequency of contributions on the Moodle course page.” If you meet with students either in person or online spend some time discussing your expectations of them as students and what they can expect of you as an instructor.

References

Brown, R. (2019, May 14). *Increase Instructor Presence with a “Welcome to Class” Email.*

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