

Creating a supportive class environment and promoting engagement.

- The importance of establishing clear expectations
- Providing a system for limiting requests for extensions and missing class. The concept is called “Life Tokens” based on the idea that “life happens.” Students are allowed up to 3 life tokens per semester that can be used in specific ways such as getting up to 3 extra days to complete an assignment or getting excused from a lecture and getting the recording of class. It eliminates assessing the excuses.
- Using polls at the end of class to gauge learning and/or reflect.
- A free and easy to use tool for creating surveys is Google Forms.
- “Exit Tickets” are one approach to the above – summarize today’s class in one sentence and other similar prompts to reflect on what was learned.
- Using individual white boards for students to respond to a question and everyone writes an answer and then one or more students are called on to share their answer. This gets everyone thinking and writing and potentially responding out loud. All good communication skills.
- We discussed the observation that many announcements and other types of communication are filled with errors and omissions, such as not providing the room for a meeting or a missing link for online. We agreed that teaching our students to more carefully proofread and check these things before posting or publishing saves time and heartache in the long run.
- Rachel shared a couple of helpful resources she is currently reading and using. The first is ***Inclusive Teaching*** by Kelly Hogan and Viji Sathy. A couple of the ideas from this book that she shared included telling students that after posing a question to the class that the instructor would wait until 7-10 students had raised their hands before calling on anyone. This prevented the same person from answering most questions.
<https://www.amazon.com/Inclusive-Teaching-Strategies-Promoting-Classroom/dp/1952271630>
- This book also had the idea that when assigning students to certain roles in a group, such as who would be the recorder, use a randomizing question that helps the students get to know one another better, such as the student who was born furthest away from their current location.
- The second resource was ***Small Teaching*** by James Lang. This book also has lots of ideas that by themselves are small but add up to make a big difference in our teaching. One idea was a “connection notebook” in which students have a notebook that once a week if not more often they are given a writing prompt to reflect on something learned in class with an emphasis on how it connected to prior learning or another class.
<https://www.amazon.com/Small-Teaching-Everyday-Lessons-Learning/dp/1119755549/>