

FIRST 4 WEEKS (online)

For each category, determine which “first four weeks” success strategies you already practice and which will be a goal for you next semester. Remember that not all strategies work for all instructors. **Choose the strategies that fit your teaching style and comfort level.**

Current Practice	Goal	Build and Encourage Relationships
		Ask students for their preferred name. Use their preferred name in discussion, feedback, office hours, synchronous meetings, etc.
		Share the Principles of Community in a brief and meaningful way by sharing what they mean to you, share the principles, but highlight 2-3 that help build community, and/or have the students reflect on the principles in pairs. If appropriate, attach the principles to a homework or in class assignment.
		Find a way to express to your students that you want all of them to succeed and you believe in them. Commit to this as a regular practice.
		Share something about yourself and your passion for your subject content.
		Share your pronouns or gender references in class and syllabus. Provide an opportunity for students to share chosen name and pronouns with you. Encourage students to do so with each other as they get to know each other but let them know sharing pronouns is optional.
		If you have any synchronous meetings, set up small breakout groups. Conduct icebreakers with the groups and encourage groups to share contact information. Plan time for group engagement for at least a few minutes of each synchronous meeting. Give groups a specific prompt to address during these brief meetings (note comparison, concept understanding check-in, group activity, assignment check-in, questions, etc.).
		Create a shared space for questions relevant to the class, such as a “Coffee Shop” discussion forum in Canvas. Encourage students to post questions there instead of emailing you so that others can benefit and you don’t get overwhelmed with email. Encourage email for questions not relevant to the rest of the class.
		Respond to students’ critical feedback about materials, curriculum or engagement regarding antiquated information, lack of representation, misrepresentation of culture or community with cultural humility and in a timely manner. Better yet, ask for this kind of feedback.
		Be your (professional) self with students. Be authentic.

Current Practice	Goal	Set Expectations/Motivate Students
		Create a map of the content or “big picture” of your course. With visuals and labels, show the topics that will be covered and how they connect to each other and the bigger picture.
		Explain how this course is relevant in students’ academic, professional and personal lives. Share relevancy of the “big picture” at the beginning of the semester as well as relevancy of individual topics as students encounter them during the course.
		Set an email response norm for you and for your students. If you commit to a 24-hour turnaround for email responses, ask your students to make a similar commitment.
		As a class, set, create, and discuss class norms and “ netiquette ” norms. Use weekly announcements to encourage a norm for the week.
		Share tools with students for responding to tension, “hot topics” conflict, and disagreements in an online classroom.
		Model how to recover from a mistake such as misgendering a person, mispronunciation of a name, affirming stereotypes, ignoring certain populations or other missteps that perpetuate exclusion and isolation. Address tension, conflict and disagreements with good facilitation and conflict management skills in a timely manner and with processing strategies or tools. Learning can be gained in these experiences.
		Create an audio/visual presence in your online course. Students respond to the person behind the class more so when they can see and hear them.

Current Practice	Goal	Set Expectations/Motivate Students
		Let students know what they need to do to be successful in your course. Post in Canvas the top five strategies for success or have students write a note to next semester's students on how to be successful in your course. Share these notes with your new students.
		Maintain consistency in your course. Post announcements on specific days, for example: reminders on Mondays, check-ins and other information on Thursdays. Whatever you decide, keep it consistent throughout the course.
		Model what you expect from students. (If you expect students to log in to your course every day, make sure you log in every day, be responsive, truthful, respectful, fair and available, etc.) Model quality.

Current Practice	Goal	Promote Active Engaged Learning
		The first week of the course sets the tone for the semester. Get students into groups, get them talking, sharing, and engaging. Find ways to encourage an audio/visual presence for students.
		Get students actively involved in the content of the syllabus. Consider a syllabus quiz, small group discussion, PollEverywhere.com, Kahoot classroom quiz, etc.
		Engage students in at least one CAT (Classroom Assessment Technique) —like a minute paper, muddiest point – per week.
		Have students set a goal at the beginning of each week. Students can share these in a Canvas thread or a meeting chat.
		Consistently engage students in at least one active learning strategy per synchronous class (think-pair-share, concept mapping, clickers, jigsaws,). Use an app or google doc where students can collaborate on work in real time.
		Create micro-lectures of no more than 12 minutes. Connect questions and activities to micro-lecture content.
		Connect learning activities to reading students were supposed to have completed before class.

Current Practice	Goal	Integrate Student Support into Learning Experiences
		Anticipate challenges students may have (childcare, transportation, working a lot of hours, no computer at home, etc.). Refer them accordingly with links in Canvas.
		Connect students to student resources at strategic times (TILT, Campus Life, the library, Counseling, Career and Employment Services, cultural and resource centers or online resources).
		Give students a specific reason to attend your office hours: set a specific agenda; give specific reasons to attend office hours, "If you're unclear about _____, this would be a perfect week to come to office hours." Remind students of office hours in announcements.
		Make suggestions about HOW to study for specific concepts in your course. Use the first four weeks to give several tips on studying smarter not longer.

Current Practice	Goal	Ensure that Students Know Where They Stand
		Clearly communicate your course grading policy.
		Create rubrics that clearly define grading criteria for each assignment and provide these to your students when giving the assignment.
		Within the first two weeks, have students complete a short in-class writing assignment or class quiz worth very few points. Grade and return this assignment within a couple of days. Consider including helpful suggestions as to how to improve performance or make a list of positives and common errors and distribute the list to students.
		Give students a short but rigorous test that is worth less than future tests will be worth, so students get a feel for the structure and difficulty level of tests for your course.
		Share with students their progress in the first couple of weeks and what they need to do to be successful in your course. Direct them to available student resources that can support their success.