

**Inclusive First Day of Class**

Creating a sense of belonging is critical for student learning, and we can set the tone for an inclusive classroom beginning on, or even before, the first day of class. You might consider sending a welcome message through Canvas or sharing your syllabus before the first day of class. This handout provides sample questions for a questionnaire we can use to get to know students, a few considerations for your own introduction as an instructor, and suggestions for introducing your course.

**Questionnaires**

Questionnaires can be an effective way to get to know your students and to give students an opportunity to share something about themselves. An alternative might be to ask students to write a letter in which they introduce themselves to the instructor, and the instructor would also share a letter with their students.

**Sample Intro Text**

Welcome to German 101! I’m excited you decided to learn German, and I look forward to having you in class this semester. I would like to get to know you a bit better, so I can make this a meaningful and interesting experience for all students in this course. Please answer the questions below and feel free to share any additional information about you that you would like me to be aware of this semester.

**Sample Questions – About the Student:**

What is your name? Would you prefer to be called a different name in this course?

What pronouns would you like me to use?

What would you like to share about yourself?

What should I know about you to support your learning experience in this course?

Do you have a career goal in mind at this point?

What is your greatest strength?

**Sample Questions – About their Learning Experience**

What is your standing? First-year, second-year, third-year, fourth-year, fifth-year, other

What is your declared or intended major?

What has been your favorite course? What made it such a good experience for you?

What study strategies do you anticipate to use for this course?

What is something you would like to learn in this course?

What should this class be like to give you a meaningful learning experience?

What challenges do you anticipate in this course?

**Sample Questions – About their Subject/Discipline Experience and Knowledge**

Have you taken/are you currently taking other (history/math/German) classes?

Why did you decide to register for this course? Do you have a specific interest?

When you think of xxx, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

How comfortable do you feel with the concept of xxx?

I’ve heard of it I can recall some information about it I can explain it

Do you have any research experience, e.g., have you worked in a lab, conducted field work, collected data, written a literature review, published a paper?

Note: You can also consider assessing students’ [prior knowledge](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/priorknowledge/) using tools such as self-assessments, concept maps, or classroom assessment techniques.

**Additional:**

What would you like to know about me?

What would you like to know about my approach to teaching?

What would you like to know about this course?

**Introducing Yourself**

To create a sense of belonging, consider sharing some information about yourself. Students might be curious to learn more about your journey to the profession or surprised to hear about your passion for beekeeping.

About Me (how to pronounce my name, things I enjoy doing, etc.)

My interest in this field (what caught my interest, how my interest deepened/changed over time)

My own experience as a student (what was hard, engaging, fun)

My professional journey

My approach to well-being

What you can expect from me/how I will support you in this course

A few words about how we might communicate in this course

Take a look at this [PowerPoint template](https://www.sfu.ca/healthycampuscommunity/learningenvironments/resource-library/resources/get-to-know-your-prof.html) for “getting to know your prof”

**Introducing the Course Content**

What excites me/interests me most about this course?

Pose a big question about the content of the course to show its relevance beyond the classroom.

Pose a question that makes students think about their personal experience in relation to the course.