

Annual Inclusive Classroom Training (AY21-22) Student-Centered Scenarios and Strategies

The scenarios below are fictitious but drawn from real-life situations described by faculty members and student affairs professionals to CELT staff. The CELT staff derived the strategies from research and evidence-based practices within the education and scholarship of teaching and learning literature.

Instructions for Student-Centered Scenario Discussion

Each student-centered scenario includes a summary with reflection questions, a set of responses, and strategies. Select a scenario to discuss, then follow these steps:

1. Read the scenario summary
2. Individually reflect on the potential responses
3. Break into small groups
4. Discuss the possible responses in a small group
5. Reach a consensus on how to respond
6. Prepare to share the small group's answer with the larger group
7. Consider the strategies for each scenario

Questions or assistance? Please email celt@iastate.edu.

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Scenario 1 - Getting to know your students

In the most recent survey of graduating students, several undergraduates stated that instructors, staff, and peers regularly mispronounced their names. Additionally, your graduate teaching assistant, Ruchika, shared her discomfort that students in previous laboratory courses she has led also failed to learn her name correctly. Your department strives to fulfill Iowa State University's Strategic Plan Goal 4, "Continue to enhance and cultivate the ISU Experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued by the university and each other."

You are planning for your first day of class and mentoring Ruchika in the laboratory component. In reviewing the course roster, you and Ruchika realize that you do not know how to pronounce many of the names correctly. You are nervous because remembering names, regardless of their origin, is something you struggle with routinely.

How does this scenario relate to creating a sense of belonging in the ISU classroom?

To note:

- ISU students represent the 99 counties of Iowa, all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, DC. A total of 2,585 international students enrolled at Iowa State in fall 2020, comprising 8.1% of the total enrollment of 31,198 students.

Reflect on your practice:

- How is your initial reaction to this scenario framed by your identity and/or experiences?
- What factors might contribute to your students' sense of belonging?
- What are the benefits of remembering your students' names and pronouncing names correctly?

Scenario 1 - Potential responses

How would you respond to the scenario?

In your small group, discuss the potential responses below, reach a consensus on how to respond, and prepare to share your answer with the larger group.

- A. During the first class, introduce yourselves by sharing the proper pronunciations in oral and written formats. For example, "I am Professor Cao, who leads the lecture, and this is Ruchika, who leads the laboratory section." Then present a slide with your names, titles, and phonetic pronunciations.
- B. Recognize that names might be difficult to remember and that you must put effort into remembering. For example, try remembering techniques, such as "memory aids" (mnemonics) as in "Avery" can be associated with "bravery," etc., or admit that you forgot the name.
- C. Provide blank table tents or nametags for yourself, Ruchika, and each student. You each create something that includes the name you wish to go by and phonetic spelling to help the whole class learn names better. You then ask students to introduce themselves on the first day so that others can begin to learn names and faces.
- D. I have a different idea of what to do...

Scenario 1 - Strategies to get to know your students

Names serve as one of our most personal and important identifiers. Learning to pronounce names correctly is a common courtesy and an important effort in creating an inclusive classroom space, one that cultivates a sense of belonging (Tulshyan, 2020). (Note - some people give much more thought to their name than others).

1. Instructor name strategies

- *Let Canvas help you.* Instruct students to include the phonetic spelling of their names or a brief recording (e.g., use Studio in Canvas, <http://bit.ly/isu-canvas-studio>) and upload a recent profile picture, thus helping you place a name to a face (<https://bit.ly/2SjE1Jq>).
- *Use a Who's in Class? form.* Do this early in the term to learn about individual students' past academic experiences, goals, concerns, and other information that could help you (<https://bit.ly/whos-in-class>).
- *Think of learning names as akin to remembering new disciplinary content.* Remembering requires intentional focus, motivation, retrieval, and practice, resulting in lasting knowledge. This way can help you be grounded and present while teaching.
- *Repetition, repetition, repetition.* When learning names, use the name as frequently as possible to help you learn; repeating something over and over aids in retention.
- *Misnaming or misgendering:* Using someone's incorrect name or pronouns; or using incorrect gendered words to refer to someone, such as guys, ladies, or sir, can be hurtful. In conversation, if you make a mistake, correct yourself and move on. Refrain from explaining intent or over-apologizing for making a mistake as this creates a burden on the person harmed to provide comfort. Remember to apologize, correct yourself, and move on: "Jamie said he discussed... sorry, they discussed... the class reading yesterday." Make sure you practice to prevent future mistakes!
- *Large enrollment courses are a different challenge.* It's nearly impossible to learn hundreds of students' names. Instead, focus on creating a sense of belonging by teaching students with warmth and openness, coupled with an organized course design encouraging peer-to-peer interaction (Freeman et al., 2007).
- *Ask students what name they use.* Students may use a different name than their legal name. For example, a student may share, "In this class, I would like to use the name [insert name] and referred to with she/her/hers pronouns." Be mindful that this is no different from someone going by a middle name or asking to be "Joseph" instead of "Joe." Keep in mind, class rosters are provided in legal names only, so it is on you to learn these differences, but doing so will go a long way in boosting a student's sense of belonging.

2. Peer-to-peer name strategies

- Create smaller "working groups" to help students recall and learn to pronounce one another's names. Instruct students to practice correctly pronouncing one another's names and share something about their names to learn from one another. For example, do you have any stories about your name? If it is a name you chose for yourself, why did you choose this name?
- Create a classroom culture where using names is common. For example, when in the discussion, Ahmed shares a thought. Then, Becca begins her comment with, "That's a great point, Ahmed, I'd like to continue with that idea..."

Resources to extend your learning

- The **Center for LGBTQIA+ Student Success ("The Center")** develops academic and personal success, community, and leadership for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual, and allied students. (<https://center.dso.iastate.edu/>) Review their resources page, which is helpful for faculty, students, and staff. (<https://center.dso.iastate.edu/resources>)
- The **International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)** provides immigration services, personal support, and cross-cultural expertise for international students and scholars throughout their university experience. (<https://isso.dso.iastate.edu/>; isso@iastate.edu)
- The **Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** works to enhance and cultivate the ISU Experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued by the university and each other. (<https://www.diversity.iastate.edu>)

References

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Scenario 2 - Students not participating, engaging, or contributing

You are teaching a course outside of your primary interest area. Before the semester begins, you post an anonymous getting-to-know-you survey to learn more about your students. Through the survey, you discover that many students in this class are transfer students with a few senior-standing students. You also know that the majority of the students are first-generation. These demographics are not commonly represented in the courses you teach, so you are excited to engage with the students.

As part of the class activities, students are assigned readings independently, with whole-class discussions. You chose the learning activities based on whole-class interactions, so there are opportunities for the students to engage meaningfully with the content and with one another. Unfortunately, this approach is not working! There are one or two students who monopolize the conversation, while the remaining students remain silent, avert their eyes from your gaze, and seem to shrink into their chairs when you call on volunteers. They appear to be uneasy and afraid to respond. It is not clear to you if the students are completing the readings before class.

How does this scenario relate to creating a sense of belonging in the classroom?

To note:

- Transfer students make up almost 20% of ISU's incoming fall 2020 class. First-generation students, those that come from a family where neither parent/guardian attended college, account for approximately 21% of ISU's incoming fall 2020 class. (Many transfer students are also first-generation students).
- Something you might not realize at ISU is that transfer students have the same access to scholarships as returning students; however, many transfer students decide to attend during the summer, which is several months after the application deadline (April 15) for many ISU scholarships. This timeline means their access to financial assistance is reduced and often increases the likelihood that transfer students may need to rely on loans to cover costs in their first summer or fall semester.
- More timely, many students have been in online courses for over a year. Face-to-face communication may be a bit unpracticed.

Things to reflect upon:

- How is your initial reaction to this scenario framed by your identity and/or experiences?
- How might you be more proactive about this situation?
- What factors might contribute to students' willingness to participate?

Scenario 2 - Potential responses

How would you respond to the scenario?

In your small group, discuss the potential responses below, reach a consensus on how to respond, and prepare to share your answer with the larger group.

- A. Use a "jigsaw" approach for the readings. Assign parts of the readings to smaller groups of students with the expectation that individuals bring one discussion question to their small group. Then, use class time for the small groups to discuss and then report back one key finding from their section of the reading.
- B. Use a portion of class time to model effective discussion. Explain and demonstrate the importance of active listening (i.e., looking at the speaker), ideas for facilitating discourse (i.e., identifying areas of agreement/disagreement), and drawing in comments.
- C. Ask your students to take a few minutes to write about what helps and hinders their participation and engagement in a short anonymous survey (online) or on index cards (face-to-face). Review their comments, share the findings with the class, and then seek to address their concerns by engaging and participating.
- D. Ignore the behavior, minimize the time for discussion, and increase lecture time. Call on the monopolizing students and decide if the other students do not want to engage; that is not your concern. There are far more important classes and projects to concentrate on that will more directly benefit the majors in the department.
- E. I have another idea.....

Scenario 2 – Strategies for student participation and engagement

Students need to be engaged to learn. Engagement can occur at any level in the class: individual (reading and critical reflection), paired and small group (discussions), and with the entire class (thumbs up/down to gauge understanding).

1. Encourage individual and group responsibility

- Provide unique opportunities for learning, reflection, and accountability (content quizzes, weekly journal entries, individual summaries of readings).
- In small group discussions, consider retaining the same groups throughout the semester with instructions for students to rotate roles of the lead discussant, recorder, group responder, etc.
- Use Think-Pair-Share, then small group discussion, with whole group sharing via verbal, written on a whiteboard/document camera (Elmo), or submitted to a discussion board.

2. Fostering participation as a skill

- For many students, participation and engagement need to be modeled, explained, and taught. Emphasize the purpose of participating (it promotes learning and connects with course objectives), outline expectations and ground rules for participation, and determine accountability measures to ensure participation. See the Participation as a skill page (<https://bit.ly/celt-participate>).
- To minimize "monopolizers," consider the following approaches:
 - Specifically ask for participation in quadrants of the class (i.e., "I'd like to hear from someone in the back right corner")
 - After class or during student hours, speak to the person who monopolizes discussion. Clarify that you appreciate their (insightful) contributions and want to create space for *everyone* to share in the discussion.
 - For those who are hesitant to speak, acknowledge and recognize their contributions. "Thank you for that idea. It furthers ..." (Davis, 2009).

3. Create a connection with your students

- Share with your students if you were a first-generation student (FGS) or transfer student. Doing so can promote a connection and help alleviate feelings of isolation.
- Ensure all students are aware of the ISU, college, and departmental student resources, learning communities, and clubs available. This awareness should include information about high-impact practices (e.g., internships, research experiences, experiential learning, study abroad) that provide excellent ways for social and academic integration, essential for all students, particularly transfer and first-generation students.

4. Useful information in the scholarship

Here are a few key findings from research that faculty should know about transfer and FGS:

- FGS tend to report a lower sense of belonging than non-first-generation students in public research university students (Stebleton et al., 2014).
- Integrating transfer students to campus is different from integrating those who matriculate directly from high school (D'Amico et al., 2014; Duggan & Pickering, 2008).
- Transfer students often experience multiple psychological/social, academic, environmental, and financial barriers and challenges when entering 4-year institutions. These include transfer shock – or a drastic drop in GPA in the first semester after the transfer, increased work and family responsibilities, and less access to financial resources. A higher percentage of transfer students are also FGS. Research has found that FGS often feel unprepared to attend college, have less perceived family and financial support than continuing generation students, and experience more significant stress from academic and social stressors (Bundy & Siberski, 2019; Siberski & Bundy, 2017; Starobin et al., 2016).

References

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- Stebleton, M. J., Soria, K. M., & Huesman, R. L. (2014). First-generation students' sense of belonging, mental health, and use of counseling services at public research universities. *Journal of College Counseling*, 17(1), 6-20. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1882.2014.00044.x>

Scenario 3 - Facilitating successful group work

You allow students to self-select groups for their semester-long projects in your upper-level course. The three projects total 70% of the final grade. Three weeks into the semester, a student Veteran returning from deployment, Dana, joins the class; you place them into one of the existing groups that had space to accommodate one additional member.

A few days later, Dana sends an email to you indicating they need to move to a different group, stating, "I am completing my work, but no one is communicating with me. They have not answered my emails and avoid me in class. As the sole African American student who is a bit older than the traditional college-age student, this feels very specific to who I am. This class is the last one I need to graduate; I cannot fail because of this group."

When you log into the Canvas discussion board, you note that Dana's team members reply to one another but not to Dana. It is curious to you that the students are treating Dana this way. You have not (that you are aware) had a student Veteran in your course before. You could use some assistance, but where?

How does this scenario relate to creating a sense of belonging?

Some things to know:

- Approximately 520 students are active duty, reservists, veterans, and guard members representing part of the ~2,600 military-connected students using GI benefits of spouses or parents (ISU Veterans Center).
- ISU's current undergraduate enrollment of Black students is 710, who are part of the 15.5% of total U.S. multicultural enrollment.

Things to reflect upon:

- How is your initial reaction to this scenario framed by your identity and/or experiences?
- How might you be more proactive in this situation?
- What factors might contribute to students' willingness to engage in group work?

Scenario 3 - Potential responses

How would you respond to the scenario?

In your small group, discuss the potential responses below, reach a consensus on how to respond, and prepare to share your answer with the larger group.

- A. Ignore it. Group work, primarily conflict resolution, is an essential skill for future classes and careers in this discipline. The students must navigate this situation on their own and figure it out.
- B. Set up a meeting with the group to introduce Dana and the need to get Dana up-to-speed. Discuss the group roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the projects and any changes/redistributions needed going forward.
- C. Reflect as an instructor *and* as a class on the importance of collaboration and communication as a part of group work. Ask the students in the class to take a few minutes to write about what helps and hinders their group work experience. Review their comments and share the findings with the class. Discuss the common group work pitfalls students previously experienced in the course and mitigation strategies if and when they arise. Provide strategies to address global concerns and those specific to the situation above.
- D. I have another idea on what to do to address this...

Scenario 3 - Strategies for facilitating successful group work

Group work necessitates emotional intelligence and skills, such as communication, time management, conflict resolution, and recognition of team member differences. It is also important for group members to recognize differences as assets, not barriers, to success.

1. Group Formation

Deciding the 1) purpose of the group project, 2) complexity and length of the group project, and 3) desired learning outcomes will help you determine the appropriate group formation.

- Group formations typically occur via random selection; instructor generated groups, mixed methods, and self-selection (not advised as self-selected teams can isolate underrepresented group members, create "groupthink" that limits idea generation, and cause peer-pressure for joining or not joining groups) (Baepler et al., 2016).
- What about group size? Ensure there is enough person-power to complete the project and not too many students to allow for "loafing" or undue difficulty scheduling (Mueller, 2006).

2. Group Work Challenges

"I hate group work!" is a common refrain from students. Group work requires additional instructor time to execute well *and* is anecdotally very frustrating for students (primarily when instructors from multiple courses assign group work). In the table below are three common group work challenges (left column) and solution suggestions for faculty (right column) to encourage students to say, "what great group experiences!" For additional ones, visit CELT's facilitating group work page (<https://bit.ly/celt-group-work>).

Challenges	Suggestions
Loafing/Overachieving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide individual opportunities for learning, reflection, and accountability (content quizzes, weekly journal entries, summaries). A students' individual work is rarely excellent, and group work is subpar.• Separate the first project into multiple in-class "checkpoints" to assess the group process and monitor dynamics.• Ask students to evaluate group performance and one another using a minus (-), a zero (0), or a plus (+) mark and constructive rationale. The instructor provides the final grade for group work.

Challenges	Suggestions
Isolation of a group member	Research and experience tell us that being the "only" group can be isolating (e.g., the only woman, the only international student, the only person of color). There is evidence that suggests the benefits of heterogeneous groups. There is also evidence to indicate if there is a limited number of visibly diverse students; endeavoring to keep these underrepresented students together limits their isolation (Bailey, 2020). Regular feedback from students and groups is essential to monitor group effectiveness.
Students do not get along	Provide students with time and opportunities to build communication, time management, and conflict resolution skills within the classroom setting. There are instances that, for the well-being of the student, you may need to reform groups.

Resources to extend your learning

- **CELT's facilitating group work** page (<https://bit.ly/celt-group-work>) shares several resources for planning and facilitating group work.
- The **Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** works to enhance and cultivate the ISU Experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, included, and valued by the university and each other. (<https://www.diversity.iastate.edu>)
- The **ISU Veterans Center** (veteranscenter@iastate.edu) is dedicated to the success of Veterans, military personnel, and family members. The Center can also be a valuable resource for faculty who have questions about supporting military-affiliated students.
- Every ISU college includes a **Director of Multicultural Student Success** (<https://bit.ly/aadmss>) who provides academic, professional and student support opportunities.

References

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Scenario 4 - A student shares personal struggles

At the start of the semester, Riley, a sophomore, actively participates in discussions, in-class activities and is completing all online assignments. Riley is a dedicated student by all accounts, and you remember teaching them in your large enrollment introductory course a year ago. Around midterms, Riley begins to miss the in-person classes and increasingly misses the assignment deadline. You've reached out to Riley twice via email, but no response. Finally, in week 10 or 11, Riley visits during your student (office) hours and seems visibly distressed. You are concerned, so you invite them into your office for a conversation. It appears that Riley was recently crying.

During your chat, which starts talking about Riley's poor academic situation, they also reference several challenges they face in their personal life. First, they mention losing family financial support for college. With that loss of support, Riley had to choose whether to get groceries, pay rent, or fill their antidepressant prescription. Riley decided not to refill their medications, and without them, there is little motivation to go to class (or even leave the house), much less do the assignments. You are caught a bit off-guard, unsure what to do next. You went to a campus training about fostering students' sense of belonging. At the time, you were a bit skeptical of all the "touchy-feely stuff," but now you feel like you need to do something to help.

How does this scenario relate to creating a sense of belonging with students?

Some things to know:

- One out of three ISU students experiences significant mental health concerns with depression, anxiety, and relationship concerns (ISU Student Wellness, <http://bit.ly/isu-mental-health-support>).
- A 2019 survey of U.S. college students by Temple University's Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice found:
 - 17% of respondents reported being homeless
 - 39% of respondents were food-insecure
 - 46% said they faced some level of housing insecurity.
- Between 40-50% of ISU undergraduate students use the Academic Success Center each year and receive approximately 6,000 requests for each tutoring and supplemental instruction annually.

Things to reflect upon:

- How is your initial reaction to this scenario framed by your identity and/or experiences?
- How might you be more proactive in this situation?

Scenario 4 – Potential solutions

How would you respond to the scenario?

In your small group, discuss the potential responses below, reach a consensus on how to respond, and prepare to share your answer with the larger group.

- A. You listen to Riley, show support, and encourage them to contact Student Counseling Services (515-294-5056). Because it's during office hours (Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.), you offer to accompany them there (3rd Floor Student Services Building) to meet with a counselor. You contact an Academic Advisor in your area or the Office of Student Assistance (515-294-1020) to share your interaction with Riley. You intend to follow up with Riley later in the week to see how they are doing.
- B. You sense that Riley is overwhelmed and say, "It sounds like you have a lot going on. It's OK if you need to drop my course. Or, if you don't want to do that, you could take an incomplete. Is there something else I can do that would help you?"
- C. Concentrate on Riley's academic concerns and ignore the personal challenges that they face. In so doing, you suggest that Riley reach out to the Academic Success Center (<https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/>) for an Academic Coach to help examine their academic concerns and perceived barriers to success.
- D. I have a different idea of what I should do...

Scenario 4 – Strategies for supporting students' struggles

Mental, physical, and other personal problems can interfere with individual students' learning and motivation to exert effort in a course (Douce & Keeling, 2014). Behavioral indicators of these problems may include missing class, arriving late, sleeping in class, missing assignments, not responding to email, and a change in appearance or demeanor (Rauff & van der Meulen, 2021; Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost, 2020).

1. Show empathy in your response to a student's immediate needs

Talk to the student in private. Listen carefully to students about their experiences at ISU. Ask them to share their perspectives; actively listen and assess how you can best be of assistance. Be supportive; let them know you would like to help and that you care for their well-being.

2. Refer a student to professional staff for further assistance

Keeping in mind that you are (likely) not a counselor, it may be helpful to take the student aside for a private conversation to communicate your concerns and gather more information. By understanding the student's situation, you can assess whether the student may benefit from your help (e.g., academic help during office hours, assignment extension) or the support from professional staff elsewhere on campus.

- If you are aware of a student exhibiting behaviors that are negatively impacting their academic performance, contact the student's academic advisor, advising staff in your area, or the Office of Student Assistance (<https://studentassistance.dso.iastate.edu/>; studentassistance@iastate.edu; 515-294-1020).
- Student Counseling Services (<https://www.counseling.iastate.edu/>; 515-294-5056)
- Thielen Student Health Center (<https://www.cyclonehealth.iastate.edu/>; 515-294-5801)
- Office of Student Financial Aid (<https://www.financialaid.iastate.edu/>; 515-294-2223)
- Text ISU to 741741 (Crisis Text Line). This text connects you with a trained Crisis Counselor who receives it and responds quickly, 24-hours a day and 7-days a week.
- ISU Police Department (515-294-4428)
- Important: If there is an immediate threat to self or others, please contact 911 or go to the hospital emergency room.

2. Encourage students to use campus academic resources

- *Partner with and promote Iowa State's academic resources.* Be sure your students are familiar with the Academic Success Center (<https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/>), the Writing and Media Center (<https://www.wmc.dso.iastate.edu/>), and the Center for Communication Excellence (for graduate students) (<https://cce.grad-college.iastate.edu/>).

3. Foster health and mental health resources

- *More than just the first day.* Include information and continually discuss campus and community health and mental health resources in your syllabus. See the wellness section (<http://bit.ly/isu-student-wellness>) on the Example Inclusive Statements for Your Syllabi page (<http://bit.ly/example-syll-state>).
- *Share a basic needs statement in your syllabus and repeat it throughout the semester:*
 - "Basic needs: To learn effectively, you must have basic security: a roof over your head along with a reliable place to sleep and enough food to eat. Take a moment to review the Food Security at ISU Student Wellness page (<https://bit.ly/foodsecurity-isu>). If you're having trouble with any of those things, please talk with me or the Office of Student Assistance via email studentassistance@iastate.edu, phone 515-294-1020, or website (<https://www.studentassistance.dso.iastate.edu/>). Together we can work to meet those needs."
- *Encourage students to use the SHOP Food Pantry on campus.* (<http://www.theshop.stuorg.iastate.edu/>).

Resources to extend your learning

- **Dean of Students Office's Student Assistance Faculty and Staff Guide** (<https://bit.ly/sa-fac-staff-guide>). For a student-related consultation, contact the Office of Student Assistance (<https://www.studentassistance.dso.iastate.edu/> 515-294-1020; studentassistance@iasstate.edu).
- **Helping Students Manage Traumatic Events** (<https://bit.ly/isu-aware-care-connect>) from the Senior Vice President and Provost in collaboration with campus partners.

References

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Scenario 5 - Most students didn't do well on an exam

Your course is a foundational requirement for majors in the discipline and serves as an essential elective in several other departments. The content provides essential skills and knowledge used later in the curriculum and is necessary for success in the field.

During the fourth week of the semester, students complete their first test in Canvas. Based on their scores, you observe that most of the students did not do well. Although it is not uncommon for this class, you are a bit surprised because it seems more students failed than ever before.

Before the next class, you receive several emails and student drop-ins to student (office) hours. In short, many of these students state: "I studied all week, and I still failed. I'm clearly not supposed to be in this major. Can we talk about dropping the class?"

How does this scenario relate to creating a sense of belonging in your discipline?

To Note:

- A contributing factor to student attrition is poor performance in gateway (foundational, credit-bearing, lower-division) courses. There is a strong correlation between gateway course retention and a student's successful degree completion. Courses with high rates of unsuccessful outcomes: D's, F's, withdrawals, and incompletes (DFWI), can substantially devastate a student's grade point average, motivation, and academic progress (Koch & Pistilli, 2015).

Things to reflect upon:

- How is your initial reaction to this scenario framed by your identity and/or experiences?
- How might you be more proactive in this situation?
- What factors might contribute to students engaging in the learning process?

Reference

Koch, D. & Pistilli, M. (2015). Analytics and gateway courses: Understanding and overcoming roadblocks to college completion. *Inside Higher Ed*.
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Scenario 5 – Potential solutions

How would you respond to the scenario?

In your small group, discuss the potential responses below, reach a consensus on how to respond, and prepare to share your answer with the larger group.

- A. Encourage students to make an action plan to use the resources available at the Academic Success Center and Student Wellness (see the Online Learner Support page, <https://bit.ly/learner-support>).
- B. Ignore it. Grades reflect a student's study behaviors and are representative of their knowledge gained in the class. There is too much content to take time to review previous material. There will be students who fail; that is life!
- C. Determine the significant "pinch points" in the exam and spend time during the next class session to focus on the major misconceptions. This review takes added time in your course calendar, but you'll figure that out later.
- D. Express your concern, but perhaps the students needed time to adjust to the way you create your exams. You know this is difficult material, but state, "I do not apologize for having a challenging course. Just try harder on the next exam."
- E. I have another idea on how to address this....

Scenario 5 – Strategies for boosting exam performance

Poor performance, especially in introductory courses, is a significant reason why students switch majors or drop out of college altogether. Lower-income, first-generation, and underrepresented groups experience the greatest opportunity gaps in gateway courses identified as "one of the most urgent and intractable problems in higher education" (Bensimon, 2005, p. 99; Theobold et al., 2020).

1. Improve your teaching

Exams provide you with the opportunity to obtain feedback on student learning, your teaching methods, and the quality of the exam itself. First, review the examination results and:

- Identify concepts, methods, and questions that students had difficulty. Are there patterns in student performance?

Then, use this information to:

- Edit (and consider removing from student scores) poorly constructed exam questions.
- Determine which concepts need additional time, ancillary materials, or supplemental instruction for current and future semesters.
- Identify the ways in which the missed material was taught, confer with colleagues, and consider additional ways to present the material to your students.
- Provide the strategies below to support your students.
- Use multiple points of feedback to inform your teaching:
 - Student formative feedback (<https://bit.ly/isu-plusdelta>)
 - Peer review of teaching (<https://bit.ly/isu-peerreview>)
 - End-of-term evaluations (<https://bit.ly/better-eval>)

2. Promote self-regulated learning

In self-regulated learning, students plan for a task, monitor their performance, and reflect on outcomes.

- *Facilitate pre-assessments and early assignments.* Begin your course or new content with pre-assessments, and ungraded or low-stakes quizzes/assignments can help you identify areas where students might need some extra supports that you or a campus resource might provide. It can also help activate previous mental models that integrate with new thinking (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016). By giving correct responses, you can help students quickly identify and correct misconceptions.
- *Explain the purpose of the exams.* Motivation is activated by the perceived value or benefit of the academic content or task (McGuire et al., 2015). It is essential to explicitly link concepts and lessons to a broader purpose, future classes, or other necessary skills.
- *Use exam wrappers.* When students receive their exam scores, they often focus on their grades. Exam wrappers are a technique in which you insert one or more metacognitive questions that encourage students to think about their study skills and time management (Lovett, 2013) more deeply. Exam wrappers ask students three kinds of questions: How did they prepare for the exam? What kinds of errors did they make on the exam? What could they do differently next time?

3. Reduce the stakes of major projects, papers, and tests.

When a single exam carries a lot of weight, the pressure may tempt academic dishonesty.

- *Offer flexibility.* Allow students to drop one or two of their worst scores on exams, assignments, or quizzes; let students replace an earlier score with a cumulative final grade; or replace some of the weight of high stakes work with smaller, more frequent assessments.
- *Reinforce new content.* Short quizzes immediately following an assignment or after a class session offers a quick comprehension check on what was just covered. This assessment helps students understand the critical points from a class activity or reading and allows you to see where students "got it" or where you need to provide more practice or explanation (Bayraktar, 2021).

4. Encourage a growth mindset.

A fixed mindset assumes that our intelligence and abilities are static. A growth mindset thrives on challenges and sees failure not as evidence of unintelligence but as an opportunity to stretch and grow (Dweck, 2007).

- *Share students' stories of overcoming struggles.* Ask students from a previous semester or from your major to reflect on their challenges and how they overcome them. Then, share these stories with your students to demonstrate that they can do it, but not yet. It just can take time to learn the content. Perhaps this is a brief panel discussion.
- *Model a growth mindset.* Do the policies on late work, make-up work, and grading reflect an opportunity for students to develop as learners by weathering potential setbacks in mastering the concepts and skills? If not, what changes may support students struggling to master it? See the Be Flexible page (<https://bit.ly/celt-flexible>).

Resources to extend your learning

- The **Academic Success Center** provides a wire-array of resources for our students to be successful; website (<https://www.asc.dso.iastate.edu/>) or email: success@iastate.edu.
- **Student Wellness** offers a new program, Thrive@ISU. Students can develop an action plan for holistic well-being. (<https://www.studentwellness.iastate.edu/thrive/>)

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