

Theme: Getting to Know Students by Name

Tip 1: Remembering Names

Learning their names is one way to build community and relationships among your students. Learning students' names is important for several reasons. For example, they feel more valued and invested in the course, more comfortable taking to the instructor and asking for help, and more likely to believe the instructor will write them a letter of recommendation (see [What's in a Name? The Importance of Students Perceiving That an Instructor Knows their Names...](#)).

As more courses move to in-person learning, instructors will lose the convenience of reading students' names on the Zoom square. So here are a few tips to remind us of ways to learn students' names:

1. Add notes about any unique characteristics next to students' names on the class roster.
2. Use mnemonics to associate students' names with something memorable or unique. You can have them create the mnemonic and say it aloud at the beginning and end of the first few class sessions.
3. Ask students to sit in the same seat or area for the first few class sessions and learn their names in clusters based on the area of the room where they are seated.

Tip 2: Pronouncing Names

Learning students' names means pronouncing their names correctly. This can be challenging when names are unfamiliar to us. Whenever you encounter this situation, be humble, ask for patience (after all, you are a learner, too), and try one or more of the following:

1. Ask the student to pronounce their name slowly while you write it phonetically.
2. For the first few days of class, ask each student to pronounce their name before speaking, and you repeat it after them.
3. Using name tents, have students write the phonetic pronunciation underneath their names.

More Info on Teaching Tips

"Teaching Tips of the Month" began as a project of Program for Active Learning in STEM (PALS) and Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) grants. Many thanks to Ray Gonzales and Alla Webb, who served as Principal Investigators of the TIDES grants. You can view archived Teaching Tips of the Month on [The Hub](#). We

welcome feedback and invite you to submit ideas for this publication to Angela Lanier,
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