“Can You Hear Me Now? Overcoming Connection Barriers in Large Classes”

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Creating Community

What’s in a name?
• Using photos/nametags to learn names
• Gather information (e.g., hometown, outside interests, and career aspirations) – helps you relate the course to students more personally

Icebreakers & Energizers
• Rather than “not possible,” even more important than in smaller classes
• Shows commitment to the value of interpersonal connection
• Helps to warm the environment
  - Class Surveys
  - Scavenger Hunt
  - Human Bingo
  - Subject-matter related (e.g., Problem-posting)

Partners – Triads – Groups
When students can’t connect with the teacher, they can connect with and be accountable to each other. Decrease anonymity to increase motivation and learning.

Respect – Research – Responsiveness

The value of ground rules
Students enter the class with histories that can impede their participation, engagement, and learning. Demonstrating respect and creating guidelines that demand dignity for all fosters connection.

Critical Incident Forms & Classroom Assessments
Seek to understand how students are experiencing your course. Ask:
- Most Engaged Moment
- Most Distanced Moment
- Most Affirming Action
- Most Puzzling Action
- Biggest Surprise

* Become alerted to problems before they are disasters
* Encourage students to be reflective learners
* Build a case for diversity in teaching
* Build trust
* Learn possibilities for development

Demonstrate specifically how you are responding to students’ comments, concerns, and suggestions.

References