Welcome to Hullabaloo U! We are delighted you have chosen to serve as an instructor for Hullabaloo U, Texas A&M’s First Year Experience course.

New student seminars have been part of the academic curriculum at American colleges and universities for over 130 years. The first freshman seminar was offered in 1882 at Lee College in Kentucky. The popularity of first year seminars has fluctuated since that time. After almost disappearing in the 1960s, the first year seminar has enjoyed a gradual and steady rebirth since the mid-1970s with the University 101 course at the University of South Carolina that was introduced in 1972. Now approximately 90% of institutions report offering some type of first year seminar.

A first year seminar course is now recognized as an effective way to address many of the issues and problems of contemporary college life. All new student seminars give students the opportunity to interact with and gain support from other students and the seminar instructor. This supportive environment helps create a strong sense of community within the larger campus. First year seminars have consistently been demonstrated to have a positive impact on student retention, learning, and engagement. Due to the strong research and assessment base on the impact of the first year seminar, it was named a high-impact educational practice by the Association for American Colleges and Universities in 2007.

The 2019-2020 pilot launch of Hullabaloo U was an important step towards scaling up this research-proven, high-impact practice. We are excited to take another huge leap forward this year towards our goal of providing a common experience for all first year students. Simply providing the experience does not make it high-impact. As Kuh (2008) states, “to engage students at high levels, these practices must be done well” (20).

We invite you to join us in this Community of Practice as we learn from one another and, together, strive to develop an engaging, transformative experience for our first year students. Thank you for the time, energy and passion you will pour into this experience and the Class of 2024.

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Additional Instructor Content in Repository

**Bolded = Not Included in Instructor Manual PDF**

**Understanding First Year Experiences & Students**
- Full Article: Student Success: Definition, Outcomes, Principles and Practices
- Introduction to Student Development Theory
- Understanding First Year Students

**Community Building**
- Building Community Activities
- Strategies for Learning & Remembering Names
- All About Me Example Worksheet
- Icebreaker Conversation Starters

**Required FYE Lesson Plans**
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**Inclusive Teaching Principles**
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**Classroom Management & Resources**
- Classroom Scenarios, Reporting and Referrals Guide
- Campus Resource Manual
Hullabaloo U
Purpose & Overview

EMPOWER  |  EQUIP  |  ENGAGE
Purpose, Outcomes & Required Content

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Hullabaloo U Aggie First Year Experience is to create a welcoming and affirming environment for each new student. Students will develop self-efficacy, self-awareness, and a sense of purpose; become actively engaged in the learning environment inside and outside of the classroom; and become socially integrated within the university community.

**Outcomes**

- Community formation and sense of belonging
- Increased awareness of campus resources
- Development of skills to achieve personal and academic goals
- Equipped to contribute to a diverse and inclusive environment

**Required Content**

- Well Being
- Success Strategies & Resources
- Healthy Relationships
- Respect & Inclusion

**Basic Principles**

- Community should be established early and reinforced often in order to promote a sense of belonging and to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.
- Course content should be tailored to the specific needs of the students in each section.
- Hullabaloo U should be an active, engaging, and enjoyable learning experience.
- Course content, methods, instructional strategies, and assignments should be purposeful, firmly aligned with the common learning outcomes, and reasonable for the number of credit hours.
- The focus of this course is having students reflect on and process course content and their experiences, rather than simply distributing information.
What Makes the First-Year Seminar High Impact?
Evidence of Effective Educational Practices in First-Year Seminars

Adapted from:

Effective Educational Practices:
1. Performance expectations set at appropriately high levels
2. Significant investment of time and effort
3. Interactions with faculty and peers
4. Experiences with diversity
5. Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback
6. Opportunities to reflect on and integrate learning
7. Relevance of learning through real-world applications
8. Public demonstration of competence

For implementation strategies of each practice, visit the Hullabaloo U Instructor Repository for the full breakdown of these effective practices.

_________________________

Student Success: Definition, Outcomes, Principles and Practices
Joe Cuseo, Marymount College

Defining student success may be done as a favorable or desirable student outcome. The most frequently cited indicators of student success in higher education include:

- Student retention (persistence)
- Educational attainment
- Academic achievement
- Student achievement
- Holistic development (intellectual, emotional, social, ethical, physical, and spiritual)

Seven Central Principles of Student Success: Key Processes Associated with Positive Student Outcomes
1. Personal validation
2. Self-efficacy
3. Sense of purpose
4. Active involvement
5. Reflective thinking
6. Social integration
7. Self-awareness

For implementation strategies of each principle, visit the Hullabaloo U Instructor Repository for the full breakdown of these effective practices and further research into defining student success.
Introduction to Student Development Theory

What is Student Development Theory?
Student development is the way that a student grows, progresses, or increases his or her developmental capabilities as a result of enrollment in an institution of higher education.

There are three types of development:
- **Change** is an altered state, which may be positive or negative and progressive or regressive.
- **Growth** is an expansion, but may be positive or negative to overall functioning.
- **Development** is positive growth.

Theory is used to describe, explain, predict, and/or influence student development. In other words, student development theory can help you to better understand, support, and serve students. However, use caution when referring to student development theories. Students are individuals and theory is simply a guide; it is not applicable to all students in every situation. You should be aware of the use of labels and avoid using theory to manipulate students.

Types of Student Development Theory
- **Psychosocial** – deals with interpersonal and identity development of students: including how students define themselves, their relationships with others, and what they want to do with their lives.
- **Cognitive-Structural** – illuminates changes in the way people think and make decisions. Examines both intellectual and moral development.
- **Typology** – examines individual differences in how people view and relate to the world. Typologies are not developmental; they are used simply to observe innate individual differences (e.g., Myers-Briggs, Holland,).

Relevant Theories

Chickering & Reisser can be helpful in understanding the progression that students have in their identity development. Students will move through the seven vectors at different rates and in various orders. Vectors interact with and build upon one another.

1. **Vector 1 - Developing Competence**: Intellectual, physical and interpersonal
2. **Vector 2 - Managing Emotions**: Ability to recognize and accept emotions and express and control them
3. **Vector 3 - Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence**: Emotional independence, self-direction, problem solving, and awareness of interconnectedness with others
4. **Vector 4 - Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships**: Increased tolerance and appreciation of differences, and capacity for healthy, lasting, intimate relationships with partners and close friends.

5. **Vector 5 - Establishing Identity**: Comfort with body and appearance, comfort with gender and sexual orientation, self-acceptance and self-esteem.

6. **Vector 6 - Developing Purpose**: Developing clear vocational goals, personal interests and activities, strong interpersonal commitments, and intentionality.

7. **Vector 7 - Developing Integrity**: Humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence.

**William Perry: Scheme of Intellectual and Ethical Development (1968 – Cognitive-Structural)**

Students progress through Perry’s scheme hierarchically, although some students may stray from straight-line development. Each stage represents a different way of thinking.

Perry’s scheme provides insight to the behavior that you may observe from first-year students. They may share dichotomous thoughts in class discussions and become frustrated by your challenge to help them see the “grey” in situations. Students can be supported as they move from a place of dualistic thinking to more relative thinking by assignments that promote critical thinking and analytical consideration of information.

**Four Stages:**

1. **Dualism**: Students view the world dichotomously (right vs. wrong, black vs. white), and assume authorities have all the answers. Students typically have trouble with reflection, comparison, and analysis because they see learning as a simple information exchange and nothing more.

2. **Multiplicity**: “Everyone has the right to their own opinion.” Students believe their peers are more legitimate sources of knowledge and multiple alternatives are now acceptable. Logic, data and evidence are viewed as less important, versus the amount of work done or time spent is seen as key.

3. **Relativism**: Students recognize the need to support opinions, while all opinions are no longer equally valid. Context is taken into account and analysis and synthesis now occur. The capacity for empathy is now present.

4. **Commitment to Relativism**: Students learn to tolerate ambiguity and to make choices in a contextual world. They develop a personal set of values and are able to make choices and commitments in the absence of complete information. Continual knowledge and learning becomes important.

**Alexander Astin: Involvement Theory (1984)**

Role of student involvement in development — States that for growth and learning to occur, students must be engaged in their environment. The amount of student learning and personal development is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of student involvement. The more students put in to an activity, the more they get out of it.
Vincent Tinto: Retention Theory (1987)
Several key factors are responsible for student attrition – a feeling of isolation, difficulty adjusting to a new environment, and an inability to integrate new information and knowledge with previous information and knowledge. As students transition into college during their freshman year, social and academic integration into the fabric of the university is critical.

Both Astin and Tinto theorized that students’ academic and social integration with the university is a critical component of their development and, ultimately, their decision to persist to graduation. The first-year seminar is a prime environment for students to consider social integration and campus engagement. Introducing students to campus resources, encouraging involvement in clubs and organizations, promoting learning through service opportunities, etc. can prompt students to become engaged in their experience, thus enhancing their learning and development.

Nevitt Sanford: Challenge and Support (1967)
The notion of challenge and support as functions of growth and development has been written about quite frequently. People grow best where they continuously experience an appropriate balance of support and challenge (Sanford, 1967). Environments that are weighted too heavily in the direction of challenge without adequate support are toxic; they promote defensiveness and anxiety. Those weighted too heavily toward support without adequate challenge are ultimately boring; they promote lifelessness. Both kinds of imbalance lead to withdrawal. In contrast, the balance of support and challenge leads to vital engagement.

**CHALLENGE**

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<tr>
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<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
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<tr>
<td>Disengage</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagnate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Growth</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
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</table>

Other areas of interest for theorists include Racial and Ethnic Identity Development, Identity Development of Women, Sexual Identity Development, Moral Development, Vocational Theory, and Experiential Learning. Refer to references and additional readings for more information.

*Works Cited:*
## Differences between High School and College

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th>College</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher/Student Contact</strong> – Contact closer and more frequent (5 days a week)</td>
<td><strong>Teacher/Student Contact</strong> – Faculty are available during office hours (only a few hours a week) and by appointment to address students’ concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition/Grades</strong> – Academic competition is not as strong; good grades can often be obtained with minimum effort.</td>
<td><strong>Competition/Grades</strong> – Academic competition is much stronger; minimum effort may produce poor grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status</strong> – Students establish a personal status in academic and social activities based on family and community factors.</td>
<td><strong>Status</strong> – Students can build their status as they wish; high school status can be repeated or changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Counseling/Dependence</strong> – Students can rely on parents, teachers, and counselors to help make decisions and give advice. Students must abide by parents’ boundaries and restrictions.</td>
<td><strong>Counseling/Dependence</strong> – Students rely on themselves; they see the results of making their own decisions. It is their responsibility to seek advice as needed. Students set their own restrictions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong> – Students get stimulation to achieve or participate from parents, teachers, and counselors.</td>
<td><strong>Motivation</strong> – Students apply their own motivation to their work and activities as they wish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Freedom</strong> – Students’ freedom is limited. Parents will often help students out of a crisis should one arise.</td>
<td><strong>Freedom</strong> – Students have much more freedom. Students must accept responsibility for their own actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distractions</strong> – There are distractions from school, but these are partially controlled by school and home.</td>
<td><strong>Distractions</strong> – The opportunity for more distractions exists. Time management will become more important to students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value Judgments</strong> – Students often make value judgments based on parental values; thus, many of their value judgments are made for them.</td>
<td><strong>Value Judgments</strong> – Students have the opportunity to see the world through their own eyes and develop their own opinions and values.</td>
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Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. All rights reserved.
Ten Transitional Stages of First-Year Students

The following phases are typical of new students’ adjustment to college. Stages may not occur in the sequence described, and students may not experience all of the phases. However, this information can serve as a useful guideline to understand the challenges students might face during the first year.

1. *Post-high school satisfaction/Pre-college elation*

   As students experience much excitement over the prospect of attending college, expectations tend to be unrealistic and are based on brief glimpses of college life from campus visits, movies, or television.

2. *Early separation anxiety*

   As they begin to pack and prepare for college, students realize that they are actually leaving behind the support systems of family and friends.

3. *Acute separation anxiety*

   As students leave home, they experience emotional moments with loved ones. They realize that they do not know the unwritten rules of this new campus culture. At this stage, it is especially critical to meet experienced older students, such as resident advisors and Peer Leaders, who can assist with the adjustment process.

4. *The honeymoon*

   This is a time of euphoria as students anticipate intellectual excitement and a satisfying social life. Students feel ready to experience all that campus life has to offer.

5. *The end of the honeymoon*

   After the frantic rush of orientation and welcome week activities subsides; students realize that college life consists of hard work, frustration and disappointment. Normal events such as long lines and class schedule changes may be unsettling to the new student. Initial grades may be lower than expected, which can come as a shock to the students who “coasted” through high school. Students may work much harder than ever before, only to receive lower grades. At this point, students often experience feelings of homesickness. Faculty and staff can help ease anxiety by helping students realize that this is normal and that they are not alone.
6. *The grass is always greener*

Midway through the first year; students often think they can solve their problems by transferring to another institution. At this point, students should be encouraged to give the college they are attending at least a full year’s try. Students should be reminded that they might have had a worse experience at another school and situations that seem impossible in the first semester often disappear later in the year.

7. *You can’t go home again*

A first visit home is often traumatic due to a sense that things have changed. Siblings are curious about college life and reunited high school friends tend to exaggerate college success. At this time students may realize that they have changed and may long to return to campus.

8. *Learning to cope*

After about six weeks, students have learned their way around campus and are expanding their circle of friends. Their self-confidence increases, they participate in more activities, and they enjoy campus life.

9. *Fear of failure*

Students often panic around the time of midterm or final examinations as they fully appreciate the amount of work involved. Students should be reminded that thorough course preparation is the best way to ensure a good grade. Warning signs that indicate trouble include panic attacks, procrastination, sleeping over twelve hours a day and avoidance of academic responsibilities.

10. *Putting it all together*

By the middle of the second semester, students notice that classes, residence life and social activities have come together into a well-integrated lifestyle. Students are more confident, better able to make decisions, and are aware of opportunities for both personal and intellectual growth.

Adapted from:
Zuker, F. (n.d.) Transitional trauma: Predictable signs in the transition from high school to college.
First Semester Adjustment Issues

Certain times during the academic year tend to be universally challenging to students. Those who understand the ups and downs of the first college year are better able to help students negotiate the challenges of transitioning to college. Below are some typical adjustment issues faced throughout the first year.

August/September
- Testing new-found freedom
- Frequent calls and visits home
- Homesickness and loneliness
- Anxiety about roommates, professors, classes

October
- Roommate problems begin to arise
- Students begin to question: “Do I fit-in here?”
- Love relationships from home remain strong, or fall apart (this is usually the time high school sweet hearts break-up)
- Consequences of decision-making are experienced

November
- Roommate challenges become more clear
- Many exams and papers due before Thanksgiving
- Excitement and/or anxiety regarding going home for Thanksgiving
- First series of campus-wide illness (cold, flu, strep, etc.)

December
- Anxiety over preparing for finals
- Excitement and/or anxiety regarding going home for the holidays
- Sadness about leaving new friendships and/or love relationships

In addition to these more predictable stressors, students may experience the following concerns throughout the academic year:
- Missing family birthday and holiday celebrations
- Missing participation in family traditions

First-Semester Timeline

This timeline was adapted from a timeline developed by the Dean of Students Office at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire to "outline the perspectives of first-year students, their parents, and faculty throughout the first semester of college." While this is a generalization, many of these events are common amongst first-year students, their parents, and faculty, and being aware of these events is valuable when planning for a first-year seminar.

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Student Perspective</th>
<th>Parent Perspective</th>
<th>Faculty Perspective</th>
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</table>
| 1    | - Saying “goodbye” to parents, siblings, friends, pets  
- Enthusiasm  
- Getting used to and along with roommates  
- Getting lost  
- Fear of the unknown  
- Homesickness starts (and continues)  
- Long distance relationships  
- Discovering house parties | - Saying “goodbye” to student  
- Dependent/independent behavior by student  
- Excitement for their student  
- Hopes that the experience will be a good one  
- Reality of student leaving hits  
- Fear of the unknown  
- Struggle maintaining the perspective that college is a milestone and not an end in itself | - Looking forward to teaching again  
- Looking forward to new students  
- Updating course syllabi  
- Receiving class lists  
- Placing material on reserve in the library  
- Excitement about quality of students this fall |
| 2    | - Do I join a student organization?  
- Following the crowd for weekend activities  
- Experimenting with alcohol  
- Adjusting to lectures  
- Managing time between classes  
- Getting (or not getting) care packages  
- Balancing work and play  
- Doing laundry | - Re-evaluation of student/parent relationship  
- Show interest in what’s going on at school  
- New quiet in the house  
- Struggle with when, how, and how often to contact student | - Beginning to identify students personally  
- Pace and intensity of faculty/student interactions pick up |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Events</th>
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| 3    | - Being sick alone for the first time  
     | - Learning to study or developing a study system  
     | - Balancing loyalty between new and old friends  
     | - Finding a purpose for college  
     | - Concern about student being sick  
     | - Disagreeing on how to best deal with a sick student  
     | - Begins to spend more time answering questions about course content  
     | - Reminded by behavior and responses that they are dealing with new students who are still used to high school. |
| 4    | - First Exams  
     | - Feeling overwhelmed  
     | - High school romances end, college romances begin  
     | - Initial roommate cordiality wears off  
     | - Computer problems and learning to check school email every day  
     | - First home visit  
     | - Adjusting to new parent/student relationship  
     | - Concerned by anonymity in lecture classes  
     | - Adjusting the parent/student relationship after first home visit  
     | - Sends news of goings on from hometown and high school  
     | - Students are asking for some form of evaluation, instructors saying grades are not important this early in the semester  
     | - Develops first impressions of students' individual and group capabilities  
     | - First absences and frustration over the question “did I miss anything important?” |
| 5    | - Starting to see the need for time management  
     | - Getting back first college grades  
     | - First reality check of academic performance  
     | - Reconciling differences between high school and college grading  
     | - Seemingly unsympathetic professors  
     | - Feelings of discouragement  
     | - Requests for more money  
     | - Siblings wanting to visit student  
     | - Adapting to student being gone  
     | - Wonders if student is studying hard enough  
     | - Contact from student starting to diminish  
     | - Frustration at professor who gave their student a bad grade  
     | - Outline mid-semester expectations  
     | - Hands back first major test/paper  
     | - Prepares for complaints and appeals  
     | - Dealing with students who got off to a rough start |
| 6 through 8 | • Frustrations with paper writing  
• Frustrations with group projects  
• New friendships evolving  
• Learning campus culture  
• Deliberate experiments with personal identity  
• First football game | • Comparing progress reports with other parents  
• No one wants to admit their child is struggling  
• Planning a visit for parents’ weekend  
• Frustration with FERPA and the fact that the only way to have access to student’s grades is through the student | • Forcing more integration into the learning process  
• Expectations are more clearly articulated |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9 | • Mid-semester academic wakeup call  
• Re-evaluation of major  
• Advisement and planning courses for the next semester  
• Frustration about class selection for the next semester  
• Frustration that professors still do not know his or her name. | • Learns of new boyfriend/girlfriend and curious as to the status of the new relationship  
• Wondering if the student is making ethical and moral decisions | • Enthusiasm over meeting new students has tempered by the challenges students present  
• Balancing what they think students should know and what they actually know. |
| 10 through 13 | • Experiencing the need to take time for themselves  
• Busy with schoolwork  
• Thanksgiving break and finding time to visit old friends  
• Beginning to look into off-campus housing | • Student spending too much money  
• Student wants to take trips with friends over winter break  
• “Does my child need me for anything other than money?” | • Recognize that the end of the semester is near, but there is still lots to cover  
• Negotiations with students to alter syllabi |
| 14 | • Crunch time begins  
• Pressure from parents regarding grades  
• Students realize they have changed since high school | • Hopes social life isn’t out of control  
• Discussing living arrangements for the next year with the student  
• Discussing car usage with the student | • First time to breathe easy since start of semester (Thanksgiving)  
• Time to get un-graded papers back  
• Make sure essential material is covered |
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<th>Winter Break</th>
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<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Everything is due</td>
<td>Finals week</td>
<td>Adjusting to living at home</td>
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<td>All-nighters</td>
<td>Packing to go home</td>
<td>Final Grades posted</td>
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<td>24-hour quiet hours in residence hall begin</td>
<td>Holiday stress</td>
<td>Changing relationships with family members</td>
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<td>Library gets busy</td>
<td>No money for gifts</td>
<td>Seeing how high school friends have changed</td>
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<td>First serious relationship ends</td>
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<td>Missing school friends</td>
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<td>Working in hometown</td>
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<td>Realization that “home” is now at school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Student calls home stressed</td>
<td>Great time for big care packages</td>
<td>Student being at home is not like it used to be.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parents wonder how to deal with student’s relationship breakup</td>
<td></td>
<td>Finally adjusted to not having student there, and then they come home for break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents try to express love and support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Learning of student’s major change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation for finals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation for the upcoming semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conferences with individual student</td>
<td></td>
<td>Catch up on reading, writing, and research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reminder that students still haven’t read the syllabus</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Travel to conferences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from the Freshman Timeline complied by Robert Shaw, Dean of Students Office, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*
Calendar of Common Student Issues by Month

Not all students will experience all these issues and concerns, and the issues won’t always surface during the month indicated. However, experience suggests that these issues often do occur during the months identified, and being aware of this might be helpful to you as you work with students.

**SEPTEMBER**

- **Homesickness**—This is a common issue for new students.
- **Roommate conflicts**—Conflicts might be caused by personality differences, lack of understanding, and unwillingness to compromise; or even the new experience of learning to live with someone.
- **Initial adjustment to academic environment**—Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority may develop because of the discrepancy between high school status and grades and initial college performance. Strategies used in high school may not be effective at the university level.
- **Exploration of values**—Students are confronted with questions of conscience over conflict in areas of diversity, alcohol experimentation, morality, religion, and changing social expectations.
- **New social life adjustments**—Students are adjusting to things like having the newfound freedom of not having to check with parents about what time to be in, having the opportunity to experience new areas, making their own decisions on when to participate in social activities, and establishing themselves in a peer group.
- **Initial social rejections**—It creates feeling of inadequacy when students are not immediately accepted in a peer group, social sorority or fraternity, or other student group.
- **Campus familiarization**—Students have not yet become familiar with campus classrooms, buildings, and meeting places.
- **Long distance relationships**—Students are torn between being loyal to their significant others from home and going out with new people.
- **Financial adjustments**—Students are adjusting to a somewhat tighter budget now that they are in college. Students who are supporting themselves have to adjust to budgeting money. Learning to responsibly use credit cards is also of concern.
- **International student adjustments**—Students experience a sense of “culture shock.” This includes confusion, vulnerability, and a lack of any advocate in higher positions while trying to make a successful cultural and academic transition.
- **Family problems**—These may seem amplified because the student may be caught in the middle or relied on for the answer. Being far away makes students feel helpless in reaching a solution.
- **"Administrative red tape"**—Students soon realize that it may be a long and frustrating process when trying to find an answer to what seems to be a simple question, or when trying to work something through the administrative process.

**OCTOBER**

- **Academics**—Stress from midterms builds because of the great demand for studying and preparation. For some students, this may be their first exam of the semester. For many students, the midterm workload pressures are followed by feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem.
- **Roommate problems**—These continue, but they are smaller in scope than in previous months.
Values exploration—Students continue to explore values, especially in the area of sexuality.

Dating/non-dating/friendship anxiety—Non-dating students feel a sense of loss of self-worth because so much value is placed upon dating. For women who date, the pressure to perform sexually increases, and consequently increases feelings of rejection, loneliness, and guilt. In some instances this leads to unwanted pregnancies.

Homesickness—This may still be experienced by a number of students.

Sadness—Sadness from not belonging to a group develops because of inadequate skills for finding a club or organization.

Financial issues—This sets in from lack of budgeting experience.

Homecoming “blues”—Students feel upset because of no date for social affairs, and lack of ability or opportunity to participate in activities.

Time conflicts—Academic and social commitments might vie for students’ time.

Class registration—Students need to start thinking about what classes they need to take in the spring semester as well as make an appointment with their advisors. This can cause a lot of anxiety.

New study skills—More time and greater workloads need to be incorporated into students’ schedules for studying.

Disillusionment with college—Student begins to realize that life at college is not as perfect as they were led to believe by parents, teachers, and counselors. Old problems seem to continue, and new ones are added.

NOVEMBER

Suicide—Increasing thoughts and deliberations about suicide occur from an inability to cope with the pressures of academic and social expectations.

Academic pressure—Pressure begins to mount because of procrastination, complexity of academic work, and lack of ability. Pre-finals stress starts to emerge as preparation begins.

Time conflicts—Time management conflicts continue.

Depression and anxiety—Students feel that they “should” have adjusted to the college environment by now.

Financial anxiety—Students’ funds from parents and summer earnings begin to run out and loans and other bills are due.

Increased alcohol consumption—Since students see this as an easy, acceptable way to relieve stress, drinking becomes more prevalent.

Roommate problems—This is mostly due to the pressure of school. Tempers flare, and people are less tolerant of others.

Health issues—Deteriorating health starts to affect performance. Reasons include the changing weather and either lack of food quality as well as stress from classes.

Dorm issues—Living unit dissension causes uncomfortable feelings with residents, resulting from apathy, academic pressures, and need for vacation from school.

DECEMBER

Suicide—Increasing thoughts about suicide occur from students’ inability to cope with the pressures of academic and social expectations.
• **Final exam pressures**—Anxiety, fear, and guilt increase as exams approach and papers are due. Increased use of alcohol and drugs is related.

• **Co-curricular time strains**—Seasonal parties, concerts, social service projects, and religious activities drain student energies.

• **Financial issues**—Worries begin with the thought of holiday gifts and travel costs.

• **“Pre-holiday blues”**—This is a special concern for those who have concerns for family, and those who have no home because of family conflicts.

• **Friendship tensions**—These become high with the onset of final exams.

**JANUARY**

• **Academics**—Anxiety about second semester performance begins because students may not have performed as well as expected the previous semester. They have the added pressure of doing well to be able to stay in school, to maintain scholarships/financial aid, or to keep grades competitive with their peers.

• **Loss of a loved one**—Some students lose a loved one, friend, or significant other over the break, and they find it hard to share the happiness and joy others experienced.

• **Transfer students**—Moving to a new environment causes feelings of intrusion because students move onto a floor where most of the friendships have already been established, priorities set, and expectations understood. Unfamiliarity with campus also creates some anxiety.

• **Financial issues**—Money problems begin because students were unable to find jobs during the holiday break.

• **Post-holiday depression**—Students are away from the security and familiar environment of home.

• **Weight gain**—Some students experience unwanted weight gain over the break with the holiday foods and home cooking.

• **Reestablishment**—Reestablishing social and academic life is difficult at first with not having to worry about classes for an extended period.

**FEBRUARY**

• **Academics**—Hourly exams and other academic pressures approach.

• **Weather**—Depending upon the weather, some people will experience cabin fever if the weather forces them to stay inside for a lengthy period of time. With the lack of organized activities to compensate for this, anti-social behavior sometimes occurs, such as excessive property damage.

• **Financial issues**—Anxiety for finding a summer job begins. This is especially true for students who were unable to find work during the holiday break.

• **Relationship issues**—Relationship anxieties increase as either couples begin to strengthen their ties (engagement) or experience weakening relationships.

• **Housing issues**—Fall housing planning begins with trying to tentatively decide about living arrangements for the next year.

**MARCH**

• **Suicide**—Increasing thoughts about suicide may occur from an inability to cope with the pressures of academic and social expectations.
- **Academic pressures**—These increase as mid-term exams approach.
- **Drugs and alcohol**—With the pressures of the end of the semester approaching, many students start to increase their use of alcohol and drugs. This can cause many problems, both biologically and behaviorally.
- **Housing issues**—Living arrangement anxieties occur with the forcing of decisions: Should I move out? Live in the same building? Stay with the same roommate? Will a friend be left out of the plan?
- **Financial issues**—Trying to find money to use for spring break is a problem, especially when your peers are going to a place other than home and you are not able to join them.

**APRIL**

- **Academic pressures**—These increase with the end of the semester. Also papers and exams are coming up.
- **Financial problems**—Financial strain from spring break effects social life. Summer job pressures continue.
- **Social anxiety**—Social life pressures increase during this time period: formal dances, parties, concerts.
- **Relationship issues**—Many students experience rejection and envy the friends who have successfully found a significant other.
- **Health problems**—Frustration from being ill sets into students. Students experience an increase in colds and lethargic feelings, which limit social commitments.

**MAY**

- **Suicide**—Increasing thoughts about suicide may occur from an inability to cope with the pressures of academic and social expectations.
- **Academic issues**—Finals pressures are at a critical level with papers, take-home exams, and studying. Some of the major effects of the pressure include increased use of coffee, caffeine pills, amphetamines, and alcohol. Financial issues—Summer job pressures increase for those who have not yet found employment.
- **Relationship issues**—Couples who will be separated for the summer are anxious and the fear that their significant other will find someone else while they’re apart.
- **Depression**—Having to leave the friends and people who have become close during the school year may get some students down.
- **Independence issues**—Students feel anxious at having to go home after having been independent the past year, especially if they are have conflicts with their parents.

*Reprinted with permission from Mansfield University of Pennsylvania Peer Leader Handbook*
Community Building
Progression and Sequencing of Community Building

Progression and sequencing are important for community building activities. To maximize potential, activities should build upon each other. Choose activities that fit your students and their level of group development. Progression and sequencing of activities should be used in a single class period as well as over the course of the semester. Once a higher level of activity has been reached, it may or may not need to be repeated. This will depend on the class’ development, needs, or progress. Activities build in the following order:

- **Introductions** – Allows all students the opportunity to speak about the simplest components of themselves, breaks initial barriers to communication
- **Name Activities** – Activities that assist the class in learning each other’s names. It is helpful to connect their name to an action, dance move, favorite snack, etc.
- **Name Challenges** – Activities in which students must recite names on the spot – provides incentive to remember names (Sheet Drop, Ball-Toss Name Game)
- **Get to Know You Activities** – Simple activities that begin to reveal aspects of a person, such as things that require stating favorite foods or activities. Activities help establish connections to others with similar interests (Lifelines, Concentric Circles, Move your Butts)
- **Icebreakers** – Once the group has reached a level of comfort with names and each other, icebreakers can be used to get the group moving, make the group more comfortable with one another, to refocus the group, or to introduce certain topics.
- **Team Builders. Initiatives** – Activities that require the group to work together to solve a problem. Lessons can be drawn from these activities that can be applied to classroom learning.
- **Boundary Breaking Activities** – Activities that require personal disclosure and may cause questioning of self or values. Students need to feel supported and safe, and groups must be well developed, to participate in these activities. The facilitator must be comfortable with facilitating and processing the activity and managing potential emotional distress.

**Tips for Success**

- This is not just a check-list to complete. Each group of activities can be used multiple times depending on your desired outcomes. Some groups may never participate in the highest level of activities. Use activities that meet your students’ needs or the topic being addressed.
- Ensure that the group is comfortable with one another before introducing activities that include touching, invasions of a student’s personal space, and/or personal disclosure.
- Activity suggestions are available throughout this chapter, in our instructor online resources, and on various websites, such as Building Dynamic Groups from The Ohio State University Extension (http://www.ag ohio-state.edu/~bdg/).
Pair & Share:

Instructions

- Students pair up and ask questions in order to get to know each other better. They will then introduce their partner to the rest of the class. Instructors can suggest questions for students to discuss while also encouraging them to be creative and come up with their own.
- Examples:
  - What is your happiest memory?
  - What is the best concert you have ever been to?
  - If you could choose to do anything for a day, what would it be?
  - If you could vacation anywhere, where would it be?

Yarn Ball:

Materials

- A ball of yarn and a clear area in the middle of the room in order to form a circle

Instructions

1. Clear out the middle of the room and form a large circle.

2. An instructor will explain how the activity works by demonstrating. He/she begins with a ball of yarn and says his or her name, where they are from, what they plan to major in, where they live on-campus, and two things they like to do.

3. Then, holding on to the end of the string, pass the ball across the circle to another person. It would be a good idea to begin with someone standing across the circle in order to discourage passing it to the individual on the immediate right or left.

4. Ensure that each person has an opportunity to participate and pass the ball on.

5. At the end of the activity, the circle should resemble a giant web. Remember to emphasize that as the ball of yarn is passed on to others, each member should hold on to the end. Use this occasion to discuss how each person is important to the success of the class and that you’ve just started making connections.

This activity can also create a sense of closure for the students’ Hullabaloo U experience.

1. An instructor will explain how the activity works by demonstrating. He/she begins with a ball of yarn and answers two questions:
   a. Which activity have I enjoyed the most in Hullabaloo U?
   b. What is one important thing that I have learned in Hullabaloo U?
2. Next, the instructor should pick someone in the circle and explain how that one person has influenced him/her, even if it is in the minutest manner. Then, holding on to the end of the string, pass the ball across the circle to that person.

3. Ensure that each person has an opportunity to answer the questions and pass the ball on.

4. At the end of the activity, the circle should resemble a giant web. Remember to emphasize that as the ball of yarn is passed on to others, each member should hold on to the end. Use this occasion to discuss how people influence others as well as the connections that have been made throughout the semester.
Name Activities and Challenges

Name Aerobics Action Name Game/Dancing Name Game

Instructions

1. Each student must come up with an adjective to go along with his/her name. Preferably, it is an adjective that describes something about him/her. (For example: clapping Carrie, exercising Erin, swing-dancing Susan, etc.)

2. Stand in a circle. Have the first person say his/her name and adjective and then do a motion that matches the adjective. Beginning with the second person, they say the first person’s name and adjective and do the motion, then say his or her name and adjective and do a motion. The third person says the information and does the motion for the first and second person, and then their own information, and so on.

   o Ex.   Person 1: I’m clapping Carrie
   Person 2: You’re clapping Carrie and I’m exercising Erin
   Person 3: You’re clapping Carrie, you’re exercising Erin, and I’m swing-dancing Susan

Variation

- Call out your name and perform a dance move of your choice. Then each new person introduces all of the people who came before him or her mimicking their dance moves and adding their own dance move. Once everyone has performed, your class has its own dance performance!

Ball-Toss Name Game:

Materials

- Ball

Instructions

Basic:

1. Stand in a circle. Go around the circle and have each person introduce themself.

2. After everyone has stated their name, call someone’s name and toss the ball to that person.

3. The recipient must then call someone else’s name and toss the ball to that person.

4. Repeat until everyone in the circle has been tossed the ball once.

5. Instruct them to remember to whom they threw the ball.

Advanced:

1. Have the group toss the ball around the circle in the original order again. Make sure people throw the ball to the same person they did the first time around, continuing to state that person’s name.

2. Add a second ball and third ball so more than one ball is being thrown at a time.

3. Throw the ball in reverse order. Start with the last person and go backwards.

4. Rearrange the circle. Have the students stand somewhere different in the circle, but continue to toss the ball in the same order.
Blanket Drop:

*Materials*
- Large Blanket or sheet

*Time Required*
- 20 minutes

*Instructions*
1. Break the students into two groups.
2. Have both the peer mentor and instructor stand between the two groups and raise a blanket in the air, so neither team can see the other team’s members.
3. Have one person from each team approach their side of the blanket. On the count of three, the facilitators will drop the blanket, and the players will have to try and say one another’s name. The first person to do so wins and takes the other person back to their team. When the game has ended, the team who has the most people wins.

*Variations of these activities appear in a variety of sources. Original source unknown.*
Ice Breakers & Get to now  You Activities

Tru Dat:

Instructions
Gather participants in a circle facing inward. Explain premise of activity as such: Each person will have the opportunity to introduce themselves to the group and make a declarative statement (For example: I love apples. The Chicago Cubs are the best team in baseball. I’m excited for the football game this weekend. I really enjoy skiing). After a participant has made their statement, everyone else in the group has the opportunity to agree. If a participant agrees with the expressed statement, they step forward into the circle, raise their hand, and shout “TRU DAT!” If a participant feels especially confident in their agreement, they step forward; raise their hand, and shout, “TRU DAT, DOUBLE TRU!” Introductions and statements continue around the circle until everyone has had the opportunity to share.

Question Ball:

Materials
- Large ball (beach balls work well) with questions printed on it.

Instructions
1. Have the students sit or stand in a circle.
2. Start by holding the ball, stating your name (if early in the semester), picking a question, and answering it. When you are finished, roll/toss the ball to someone else in the circle.
3. When they receive the ball, the question on top is the one they have to answer (after stating their name).
4. Have this student roll/toss the ball to another class member, etc.
5. If this game is played early in the semester, have the students call out the name of the person they are rolling the ball to, to learn names. When the person receives the ball, have them state their name before answering the question.

Two Truths and a Lie:

Instructions
1. The group members must pick three facts about themselves (characteristics, significant events, accomplishments, etc.) to share with the group.
2. Two characteristics must be true, while the third one is false.
3. After an individual shares his/her three things with the group, the group must then guess which of the three is not true.
   - Ex. I have traveled to four countries (truth)
   - I love to run (lie)
   - I want to learn to ride a motorcycle (truth)
Note Card Activity:

*Instructions*
1. Give students a note card and tell them to write down three interesting facts (characteristics, significant events, accomplishments, etc.) about themselves. They should not write their names on the cards.
2. When they are finished, collect the cards.
3. Begin each class period by reading one of the cards and having the class guess whose card it is based on the facts.

Color-Coded Candy Game:

*Materials*
- A bag of candy with several different colors of individual pieces (M&M’s, Starbursts, Skittles, etc.)

*Preparation*
- On a sheet of paper, list get-to-know-you type questions
  - Ex. What is your favorite food?
    - Why did you come to Texas A&M?
    - Do you live on or off campus?
    - How many siblings do you have?
    - What do you like to do in your free time?
    - What is your favorite subject in school?
    - What student organization do you plan to join?
    - What is your major?
- Assign each question a color, but do not let the students see this list prior to selecting their candy.

*Instructions*
1. Allow each student to pick a couple of pieces of candy before you explain the activity. Tell the students not to eat the candy.
2. Explain that the color(s) they chose corresponds to a question and then allow them to go around the circle and answer the question(s). After they have answered, they may eat the candy.

I Have a Link

*Purpose*
- This exercise gives students the opportunity to see the things that they have in common.

*Instructions*
Version 1:
- Split into small groups of four-six people. Have each group list as many things as they can that they all have in common. Let them report back to the rest of the class.

Version 2:
- Get the whole class involved! Start off by having your class sit in a circle. Stand and begin talking about yourself, telling your name, major, etc. Once someone else has something in common with you, they should stand up and shout, “I have a link!”
They then give their name and start describing themselves. Then someone else will stand when they have something in common with the second person. This continues until everyone in the room is standing. The only rules are that a connection, such as the same major, cannot be repeated twice. Additionally, everyone must say their name before they start talking about themselves. Lastly, if two or more people jump up at the same time with the same connection, the person talking about themselves must choose who gets to go next. Let students know that they can about things they like to do, favorite movies, music, television shows, etc.

Version 3:
- As a class, list things that the whole group has in common.

**Move Your Butt:**

*Instructions*
- Stand in a circle, with one person in the middle. The middle person says something that applies to themselves, but may also be true for others in the class (i.e.; If you are an only child, move your butt, If you live in Patterson, move your butt). Everyone who has that trait in common with the person in the center scatters to fill an empty spot in the circle. The person who can’t find a spot becomes the person in the middle.

**Mingle, Mingle, Mingle:**
- This activity is designed as an ice-breaker to help individuals in a new group quickly learn a little bit about each other.

*Time required*
- 15-20 minutes

*Materials*
- Index card for each participant
- Pen/Pencil for each participant

*Instructions*
1. Give each participant an index card
2. Instruct students to write a question on their index cards. It may help to suggest only writing a question the author would be comfortable answering. Creativity should be encouraged. Some sample questions:
   - If you were invisible for a day, what would you do?
   - What is one thing you enjoy that no one would ever suspect?
3. Then have the participants “mingle” about the room. There is a mingling song – Mingle, Mingle, Mingle – or you can use a timer and give students approximately 10 seconds to mingle and move around the room.
4. Once you stop the song (or timer), they should introduce themselves to the person closest and ask one another their questions. Once each question has been answered, the partners switch questions.
5. Start the song again and repeat the process several times.
6. After the game, suggest that participants recall the best questions asked. You might have a small prize for this. Ask them how they are feeling now.
Paper Plate Date:

Materials
- 1 paper plate for every student in your class

Goal of activity
- One-on-one discussion between students

Preparation
- Number each plate from 1-12 like a clock (12 at the top and 6 at the bottom)

Instructions
1. After you pass out the plates, you give the students a few minutes to set up “appointments” with one another. For example, if I’m Katharine and I want to meet with Michelle at 2 o’clock, I should write down “Michelle” next to the 2 on my plate and Michelle should write down “Katharine” next to the 2 on her plate. You may have to help students make sure they fill in all their times or if you have an odd number of students, 3 students may need to meet together. Encourage them to meet with people they don’t already know.

2. After they have set up their appointments you will call out each time starting with 1 o’clock, then the students will meet with their 1 o’clock person they have written on their plate. Give them two or three minutes to discuss each topic and then move to the next appointment time until you’ve covered all the times.

Get to know you. Questions:
  a. At a baseball game . . . peanuts or popcorn?
  b. Everyone has a favorite movie, what’s your least favorite movie?
  c. What was your first car?
  d. Soda or pop?
  e. How do you tell time? A watch, a cell phone, ask a friend. . .
  f. What was your best Halloween costume?
  g. What’s your favorite ‘80s rock band?
  h. TV show you hate to admit you love.
  i. What color crayon are you?
  j. Cats or dogs?
  k. Favorite holiday.
  l. Do you have a stupid human trick?

Who’s Who Bingo:
- This is a great activity to get students up and moving, and to get them to know a little more about each other. It is also a great way to begin to understand the diversity of the class. It’s important to make sure students mingle for this exercise: people have a tendency to talk only to one or two people. The purpose is to talk to as many different people as possible.

Time required
- 20 minutes

Materials
- Bingo game boards for each student (sample included)
- Prize for the student with the most items
**Instructions**

1. When handing out Bingo sheets, remind students the purpose is to get different names. They can only have each person sign their card once.
2. Pass out Bingo cards face down. Wait until everyone has received a card and has a writing instrument ready. Start the time when they flip their cards over.
3. State a type of Bingo the students must try to get (four corners, diagonal, etc.). Students fill their squares by getting students who meet the criteria to initial them.
4. When the winner is announced, have them introduce everyone who initialed one of their squares.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Has lived in Texas all their life</th>
<th>Has traveled to another country</th>
<th>Considers themself a member of a minority group</th>
<th>Lives at home</th>
<th>Hometown is more than 300 miles away</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Likes to dance</td>
<td>Considers themself a good writer</td>
<td>Is majoring in math or science</td>
<td>Played on an athletic team in high school</td>
<td>Has never been to a college football game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans to join a fraternity or sorority</td>
<td>Was born in another country</td>
<td>Plays a musical instrument</td>
<td>Speaks another language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has more than three brothers and/or sisters</td>
<td>Knows all the words to the Aggie War Hymn</td>
<td>Lives on campus</td>
<td>Is still deciding on a major</td>
<td>Has a pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in volunteer activities in high school</td>
<td>Plays a musical instrument</td>
<td>Has no former friends at Texas A&amp;M</td>
<td>Is the first in their family to go to college</td>
<td>Is currently working while attending Texas A&amp;M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Self-Disclosure Activities

**Lifeline Activity:**
This activity allows students to introduce themselves and their life stories leading them to Texas A&M. They can disclose as much personal information as they are comfortable sharing and may reveal things about themselves that allow for connections to be made with other classmates. They also may reflect upon their lives, good and bad, and assess where they are now.

1. Instruct students that they will be telling the story of their lives, using visual representations. They may choose to present their lives in the form of a timeline, a PowerPoint presentation, decorate a CD cover and select songs which they feel represent them or they strongly identify with, create a photo collage, or however else they choose that best reflects their personalities.

2. Typically, students choose to prepare a poster board to present to the class. They often include pictures and drawings. Students should include their names on the lifeline, as well as monumental events that took place, like the birth of a sibling, a car accident, graduating from middle/high school, coming to college, etc. Each student’s lifeline should end with their arrival to Texas A&M – it demonstrates a commonality between the students.

3. Presenting the lifeline is a key component of this activity. Students should each have a turn speaking in front of the class, should be given ample time to present and elaborate as much or as little as they wish, and should receive validation for their lifeline via clapping and questions from the rest of the class.

4. It is often helpful for the instructor and/or peer mentor to demonstrate their lifeline when assigning the activity. This allows students to have a visual understanding of what the activity entails and reminds the students that the instructor would never assign something that they don’t think is important. If the instructor and/or peer mentor does go first, keep in mind that they are setting the tone for the rest of the lifeline presentations. They set an example of how quickly students should present, how much detail should be shared, and a standard of quality in the work.

**Life in a Can/Life in a Box:**

*Instructions*
Find a can with a lid (a Pringles potato chip can works well) or shoe box depending on how challenging you want to make the activity. Put in the can things that represent you. A toy bike if you love to cycle. Put in pictures of your family and friends.

Presentation guidelines are the same as Lifeline (see points 3&4 from previous activity)
Five Minutes of Fame:
- This activity is designed to allow your students to get to know the “hidden” side of one another, the sides they don’t often get to see in a classroom setting. The end result is a class who has a great respect for one another and their (sometimes hidden) talents and interests!

Time required
- 5 minutes at the beginning of class for each student.

Materials
- Signup sheet for the dates during the semester students will present. Be sure to have enough dates for each student in your class. You can always double up on some days.

Instructions
1. Explain the ground rules:
   a. Each student will prepare a 5-minute presentation on something they are especially interested in, talented at, or just know a lot about. (A few examples include musical talent, athletic interest, collections, pictures of hobbies, etc.)
   b. They must bring some kind of prop to demonstrate or illustrate their interest.
   c. They should entertain questions from the group once they have completed their brief presentation.
2. Pass around the sign-up sheet.
3. You might want to remind students when their presentations are coming up.
4. You should also consider doing a Five Minutes of Fame yourself!

The Story and Soundtrack of My Life
Imagine a book is going to be written about your life up to this point. Create a cover for the book, along with a table of contents. Choose a title for your book that speaks to you—what you believe, how you feel, and how you see the world. Then create a table of contents with 10 chapters. Each chapter title should relate to a key event in your life; then choose a song title, lyric or a quote from another source to illustrate that event and go along with that “chapter” in your book. Decorate your book cover and table of contents any way you choose. Everyone will give a brief, informal presentation about their book to the class so that we may all get to know each other better. BE CREATIVE AND HAVE SOME FUN WITH THIS!
Group Check-in Activities

The following activities are useful ways to gauge what is on the mind of our students and develop group cohesion. These activities can be done as a large group, in which each student reports; shared with a partner; or utilized in small groups; depending on the time constraints and goals of the class.

Ask students to start a sentence with the phrase:

- I gotta tell ya...
- I hate it when...
- People think I’m cool, but...
- I’m embarrassed to tell you...
- Today I am feeling...
- I’ve got news for you
- If I win the Powerball Jackpot

Blood Sweat & Tears – Encourage students to tell stories about strange things they have experienced or heard about that involve blood, sweat, and/or tears.

Cell Phone Icebreaker – Ask students to find the first person in their cell phone contacts whose name starts with a predetermined letter. Ask students to share how they know that person.

Challenging or Unexpected – Ask students to report if anything challenging or unusual has happened to them, one of their friends, or someone they know, in the past week.

Current Events – Either bring in a current event, or ask students to suggest current events for the class to discuss. For example, when the lottery is particularly high, ask students to share what they would do with the money if they won, and why.

Hashtag – Ask students to describe their week using a hashtag phrase, for example, “hashtag worst week ever” or “hashtag TGIF.”

Hat Chat – Ask students to write something that they are struggling with on a small piece of paper and place it in a hat. Draw one at random and facilitate discussion with the class about the issue.

High, Low, Change – Students share the highlight of their previous week (High), the low of their previous week, and/or something they plan to change in the upcoming week.

Rant Wheel – Create a digital wheel (http://wheeldecide.com/) and include topics that students are can rant about such as food, roommate, parking, classes, etc. Spin the wheel a few times and open the floor for students to share negative and positive thoughts regarding the selected topic.
**Roses, Buds, and Thorns** – Students share the highlight of their last week (Rose), challenge of the last week (Thorn), and thing they are most looking forward to (Bud).

**Share the Love** – Using a bowl of Hershey’s Kisses, students choose one and share an experience in which they either did something kind for someone, had something kind done for them, or witnessed an act of kindness that week. (If there are 3 wrapper colors, colors can be assigned to an act of kindness).

**State of First-Year Students** – Ask students to report on what is happening with them and their friends on campus. What are they excited about? Stressed about? Confused about?

**Sweet & Sour** – Students take a candy from a bowl. If the candy is sweet, students share a positive thing that has happened in their life; if it is sour, they share something that has been a challenge.

**Thumbometer** – For a quick check-in, ask students how they are doing by displaying their feelings with a thumbs-up for positive, thumb-sideways for mediocre, or thumbs-down for negative.

**Twitter Follow** – Ask students to think about the different people/accounts they follow on Twitter and share which one is their favorite.

**Weather Emotions** – Ask students to share how they are feeling that day by choosing the most appropriate type of weather and explaining why they chose it.

**Weird Weekend Stories/You Won’t Believe What I Saw This Weekend** – Ask students to share odd, unique, or strange stories from the weekend.

**You May Think I’m Cool, but** – Ask students to take turns finishing the statement. Encourage them to share something funny or surprising about themselves.
Wheel Within A Wheel/Concentric Circles:
- Wheel Within A Wheel is an exercise designed to help students meet several other classmates and create energy in the classroom.

Time Required
- 2 minutes per question

Materials
- Topics/questions

Instructions
2. Have half your students form an inner circle in the center of the room, facing outward.
   *If circles are too cumbersome for your classroom, you can do the same exercise by asking students to pair up with a different partner for each topic.
3. Have the other half form an outer circle, facing the inner circle.
4. Explain the rules: The inner circle will stay seated (or still if standing) throughout this exercise. The outer circle will rotate to the right, one person at a time, for each part of the activity. Each time students get to meet the next person in front of them, give them a topic to discuss with each other. Students will have about two minutes to introduce themselves and share their thoughts on the topic, and then they will rotate to the next person.
5. Read the first topic and let the students begin.
   - What do you consider to be one of your biggest accomplishments in life?
   - What person have you affected in a positive way? How?
   - What goal have you achieved that you found particularly difficult?
   - What person has most affected your life in a positive way? How?
   - What do you consider to be your most positive personality traits?
   - Add your own...

Share Time:
- Share Time is a great way to open up an issue for discussion. These discussions can range from topics in the media, to academic topics, to topics relating to any issues your students are experiencing, such as troubles with class, relationships, keeping in touch with hometown friends, etc. Share Time can be used anytime throughout the semester.

Materials
- List of possible questions

Instructions
1. Have students sit in a circle on the floor, and begin discussion. Depending on the issue, it may be good to set some ground rules, such as no interruptions, everyone speaks, etc. Remind students that whatever is said will not leave the room.
2. There are many ideas for these discussions:
- Have a situation box. Students can write down ideas that they would like to discuss but do not want to bring up. They can write them down, put them in a box and the instructor or peer mentor will bring up the question to the class.
- High/Low of week
- Families and relationships
- Alcohol use
- Current events
- General venting or concerns about life at Texas A&M (this is particularly good after the first week or so)

**Building Your House:**

*Instructions*
Everyone “builds their house” by writing answers to these questions or by creating a piece of artwork representing their house.

- Foundation – What are your morals, beliefs, traditions? What do you stand for?
- Walls – Who is your support team?
- Front Door – Who has “opened a door” for you, given you an opportunity?
- Windows – Where will you be in 5 years or after graduation?
- Chimney – How do you let off steam, decompress from stress?

**Boundary Breaking:**

- Boundary Breaking is a group interaction experience that encourages community building. This exercise aims to speed up the process of becoming aware of others. Questions used encourage more than superficial interaction. This exercise also encourages and reinforces the skill of listening.

*Time required*
- 1 class period

*Materials*
- Boundary Breaking Questions

*Instructions*
1. Have the students sit in a circle on the floor, as all persons should be in view of all group members.
2. Most students feel comfortable when people share information about themselves freely and feel uncomfortable in groups when people refuse to share information. Over time, classes often develop a sense of community, but with encouragement, this process can be accelerated.

*Facilitation Instructions*
1. The leader must present a serious face in introducing and conducting Boundary Breaking. Be especially careful of side conversations and jokes. Don’t be afraid to share information about yourself.
2. It is important that the leader encourage students to give honest answers, to express sincere feelings, and to respect the thoughts and feelings of others. One joker will ruin this experience for all. Laughs, funny answers (when truthful and sincere) are delightful.
and natural expressions. These can also be defense mechanisms that hide us from others.

3. Do not explain the questions. Simply read the question again if asked for an explanation. Ask students who speak softly to repeat answers so all can hear.

4. Read these instructions to participants:
   1. Each person is to answer all questions.
   2. You may pass while you think, but we will always come back to you. (Leader may wish to appoint a helper who keeps track of people who pass).
   3. No one is allowed not to answer.
   4. “I don’t know” is not an answer.
   5. We are here to listen.
   6. We are not here to debate.
   7. We are not here to disagree.
   8. You may not comment on the answers of others or ask for explanations until the end.
   9. The key word is listen...listen...listen.
   10. I will read a question, and the person to my right will answer then the next person and the next...until everyone has answered the question. I will then read another question and the second person to my right will begin. Everyone will have the opportunity to answer first.
   11. Don’t repeat the answers of others unless it is truly what you wished to say. (If students say “same as him/her,” ask them to state the answer in their own words).
   12. You may give any answer you wish, but answers must be honest and truthful. I request your sincere thoughts and feelings.

Breaking Boundary Questions
(May be presented in any order)

1. What is your favorite “toy” at this point in life?
2. What is the title of the last book that you read?
3. What leisure time activity pleases you most?
4. What is the greatest problem in the United States today?
5. What is the best regular program on television?
6. If you could smash one thing and only one thing, what would you smash?
7. If you could travel to any place in the world where would you go to first?
8. What emotion is strongest in you?
9. What do you think people like in you the most?
10. What do you think people like in you the least?
11. Who has most influenced your life?
12. What would you like to be talented at that you are not at the present time?
13. What TV advertisement bothers you the most?
14. What one day in your life would you like to live over?
15. What delights you most about being at Texas A&M?
16. What is your strongest fear about being a college student?
17. If you were shipwrecked on a desert island, what one item would you most want to take (You cannot take electronic entertainment, e.g. radio, TV, or a friend)?
18. If you could have a dinner conversation with anyone alive today, who would it be?
19. If you could build one thing, what would you build?

**Reflection Questions on Boundary Breaking Activity**

Answer the following questions as you think about the experience of the last half hour.

1. What answer (yours or others) surprised you most?
2. I want to know more about _____’s answer.
3. This group...(complete the sentence)
4. I promise this group...(complete the sentence)
5. How do you feel now?

Leader should thank the group as an ending to this exercise. Groups often physically relax during the game, and the leader might note the success of the experience by calling attention to body positions. Invite people to ask questions, find someone they want to know better, etc. as class ends.

**Possible follow-up assignments:**

- Write a reaction to the exercise. What did you notice about yourself during the event?
- Write a reaction paper about friends. How do you pick your friends? What defines a good friend? Do you initiate friendships or wait to be picked as a friend?
- How did high school change you?
- Who will influence you most during your college years and why?

*Variations of these activities appear in a variety of sources. Original source unknown.*
Closure Activities

Peer Affirmation Exercises:

- **SIS/SOS (Strengths I See/Strengths Others See)**
  - Give each student a large piece of paper (about poster board size). Direct them to write their name at the top. They should also draw a line down the middle creating two columns. The column on the left should be headed “SIS” and the column on the “right” should be headed “SOS”.
  - In the left column, students should write the strengths and qualities that they see in themselves.
  - Then each student should hang his or her poster on the wall around the classroom. Each student proceeds to walk around the room writing on or signing the posters of their peers. Students should write the strengths they see in a person in the right column of their poster. If the student sees a strength in the left and/or right column with which they agree, they should initial next to it.
  - Once everyone has made it around the room and had a chance to add to every poster, students can go and look at their own poster.
  - Discuss what it feels like to have your peers recognize personal strengths and what the experience was like.
  - A variation of this activity is to make a poster for every student in your class with “I had fun with _______ in class this semester because...” on the top. Let students go around the room and finish the sentence on each of the posters.

- Write notes to your students or have students write notes to each other sharing memories, compliments, best wishes, etc. If you like, attach them to a small goodie bag.

- Give awards to each member of your class. These can be humorous, serious, superlative, etc. For example, you could give an award to the student who is mostly likely to wear pajamas to class every day. Students may enjoy creating awards and then nominating others for them, so consider involving them in this activity.

- Create a class yearbook. Each class member creates a personal page with at least one picture. Collect each student’s page and then copy and bind them. Pass them out before or on the last day of class so that students can sign each other’s yearbooks.

Keeping in Touch Exercises:

- Create a class directory and/or let students each create business cards to exchange in class.

- Create a Facebook group and post questions regularly in the spring.

- Arrange a class reunion for the spring semester. Attend a free college sporting event, have a picnic on the Horseshoe, all go out to a movie together, etc.
Self-Reflection Exercises:

- Ask students to write a newspaper headline describing their first-semester experience, their experience in Hullabaloo U, how they have changed, etc. Each student should then share their headline and explain its meaning.

- Have students complete sentence stems, either verbally or in writing. Some example sentence stems include:
  - This semester I learned...
  - My favorite part of my first semester at Texas A&M was...
  - One way I have changed/grown this semester is...
  - I have been successful this semester by...
  - If I could do this semester over again, I would...
  - One piece of advice I would give to next year’s incoming students would be...
  - My favorite part of this class was...
  - My least favorite part of this class was...
  - I will use what I learned in Hullabaloo U next semester by...
  - As a result of this class, I...
  - If I could change one thing about this class it would be...

- Have students take pictures that represent their five favorite things about the semester. Create a “gallery” in your classroom by having each student post his or her pictures on the wall (clustered together) and then walk around the room as each student shares the meaning of their photography.

- Place an essay question on the final exam that asks students to reflect on their first semester or their Hullabaloo U class. An example question include:
  - I would like you to do an evaluation of yourself in relation to this class. Please answer the following questions, not necessarily in the given order. Please feel free to add anything else you would consider appropriate to help me understand how this course went for you.
    - How has your approach to college changed as a result of this course?
    - How has your attitude or feeling about college changed?
    - How do you feel you have changed during the semester?
    - What would you do differently if you had the chance to do it over again?
    - What else would you like to add that I did not ask?

Hot Seat:
This is a sharing activity designed to reinforce a sense of community, mutual trust, caring, and lasting communications. The instructor sets a serious tone for this exercise, encouraging everyone to remain involved and be honest in her/his participation.

The class sits in a circle with a chair (swivel chair preferably) in the center.

1. Each student is then invited to sit in the “Hot Seat.” The selected person has 60 seconds to say anything he or she wants to the class or any individual in the class. The rest of the class must remain silent and listen to the comments.
2. Then for 2-3 minutes anyone in the class can say anything she or he wants to the person in the “Hot Seat” and that person cannot respond.

Note: Extroverts will volunteer first, but eventually even the quietest and most reserved member of the class will step forward. One interesting twist is to let the person who leaves the hot seat select the next participant. The experience may be most powerful for those who wait to the last so don’t let anyone off or hurry the final participants. It is a powerful closure experience.

Mail Box:
This activity involves each student writing a note to all other students in the class expressing their thanks, thoughts, or wishes for that person. This takes about 40 minutes and can be done in conjunction with other closure activities or evaluations. Faculty members should encourage students to read these notes immediately and then put them away to read later. The final personal expression is a powerful way for students to remember each person in the class.

Symbolic Gifts:
Each member of the class prepares a fantasy gift (objects, values, people, ideas, etc.) for everyone in class. They may present these or some tangible symbol of this gift to others in the class. They may be asked to stand in front of the person to whom they are giving these symbolic gifts and hold eye contact with them during the process. This closure activity allows students to be as creative as they want. Some prompting and suggestions from the instructor can help get things going. You may even want to liven it up by creating a mythical “fountain of gifts” in the center of the room from which these symbolic gifts can be drawn and delivered.

Meaningful Quotes:
In this activity, each class member selects one or two meaningful quotes from whatever book you have read and explains why they are so meaningful to them.

Your Last Statement:
Each member of the class is asked to present a short statement about themselves and their lives on the assumption that this is the last thing they would ever be able to say. The results are a powerful statement of who our students think they are at this point in their lives.

Pipe Cleaner Art:
Have students choose three pipe cleaners. Ask students to construct something that represents their experience in Hullabaloo U or their first semester of college. They can create three separate items or one larger item. Once the students have created their items, have them brainstorm how these facets of their life are connected. Have each student present his/her pipe cleaners to the class, along with what they mean and their connections. If appropriate, discuss how these ‘connections’ are important in college.
**Touch Someone Who:**

*Instructions*

1. Students sit in a circle with their heads down and their eyes closed. You may also choose to do this standing. Instruct students that they are to remain silent during this activity. The only person who should be talking is the facilitator as they read statements from the “Touch Someone Who...” list.

2. Choose two or three students to stand up to be the first one(s) to do the touching. Instruct these students to open their eyes. Everyone else should be keeping their eyes closed.

3. Read aloud some of the affirming remarks from the “Touch Someone Who...” list. The selected student(s) walks around the circle and taps the shoulders of students who match the remarks.

4. After a few remarks have been read, have the standing student(s) sit down and then choose another student or students to do the touching. Read several more statements. Continue rotating these students until every student has had a chance to do the touching. Remember to be aware of students who have not been touched and do so yourself.

5. Discuss how this activity made everyone feel and ask if anyone was surprised at how another student saw him/her. Make sure to have a positive ending to the discussion.

Begin each statement with “Touch someone who...”

- You consider to be a friend
- Is creative
- Is ambitious
- Has taught you something
- You want to get to know better
- Has a unique outlook on life
- Always can see the positive side of things
- Makes you think
- Is a leader
- Is easy to talk to
- Isn’t afraid to learn and make mistakes
- Is self-motivated
- Is self-less
- Has given you honest and helpful feedback
- Treats others as she/he wants to be treated
- You respect
- Takes the time to let you know how special you are
- You care about
- Who has helped you
- Is dynamic
- Makes you smile
- Makes you laugh
- Is innovative
- You trust
- Is dedicated
- Is sensitive
- Is compassionate
- Is dependable
- Is honest and trustworthy
- Is down to earth
- Is insightful
- Has a positive mental attitude
- Is always happy
- Is intelligent
- Is a good listener
- Is willing to take a risk
- Challenges you
- Is energetic
- You like to spend time with
- Is a caring person
- Goes that extra mile

*Variations of these activities appear in a variety of sources. Original source unknown.*

Inclusive Teaching Principles

These lists offer examples of concrete strategies aligned with general inclusive teaching principles. Reflecting upon your teaching practice, do you or would you use any of the following strategies?

✓ = I use this in my teaching
~ = I sort of use this in my teaching
X = I do not use this in my teaching
✩= I would like to try this, though I may need more information or resources

TRANSPARENCY

Clearly communicating about norms, expectations, evaluation criteria

☐ Explicitly communicate the purpose, task, and grading criteria for each assignment.
☐ Clarify how you’d like students to address you, especially if you teach students with a range of educational and cultural backgrounds.
☐ Share in easy-to-find places (syllabus, Canvas site, etc.) your preferences for how students should communicate with you, whether to ask questions or talk more broadly about course material: what kind of questions/topics are best for office hours, which are best for email, what do you want brought up in the full class, what should be addressed to a GSI, etc.
☐ Explain the learning objectives of the activities you use class time for (e.g., discussion of readings, lectures, critique of peers’ work, independent work on projects).
☐ Communicate your sense of the instructor’s and students’ respective roles in shaping and guiding class discussions. (What are students’ responsibilities, what are yours? When and why might these shift?)
☐ For writing assignments, explain your expectations around the relative importance of students’ ideas/analysis and their sharing of information or ideas/words published by others. (This can be especially important if you have students who have previously learned in educational systems where deference for expertise is prioritized over original thought.)
☐ Offer guidance on how students ought to allocate time on assignments and prioritize various out-of-class tasks.
☐ Dedicate time in class for students to ask questions about assignments and expectations.
☐ Invite students to share information about their own expectations about the learning environment based on their prior experience to help you understand where your expectations may be mismatched.
☐ Communicate (on a syllabus and/or in person with your class) your goal of creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment.

What other ways do you seek to be transparent about norms and expectations? What are additional areas where you could be more explicit about your expectations or assessment process or criteria?
ACADEMIC BELONGING

Cultivating students’ sense of connection to the discipline + scholarly and professional communities

- Communicate high expectations and your belief that all students can succeed.
- Allow for productive risk and failure. Emphasize that struggle and challenge are important parts of the learning process, rather than signs of student deficiency.
- Assess students’ prior knowledge about your field and topics so you can accurately align instruction with their strengths and needs.
- Help students connect their prior knowledge to new learning (e.g., when introducing a new topic, ask students individually to reflect on what they already know about the topic).
- Learn and use students’ names and pronouns; learn what they choose to be called (which may differ from a name on a roster) and how it’s pronounced.
- Encourage students to learn and use one another’s names, correctly pronounced.
- Build rapport through regular icebreakers.
- Emphasize the range of identities and backgrounds of experts who have contributed to your field, and/or sponsor discussion about the reasons for a history of limited access to the field.
- When inviting outside critics or speakers, seek to identify professionals who bring a range of backgrounds, including identities that are different from yours.
- Prepare outside visitors to contribute to the inclusive environment in your classroom (by making sure they are aware of accessibility needs, sharing norms you’ve established for inclusive discussions, etc.).
- Acknowledge campus events or incidents that may be creating barriers to students’ sense of being welcomed and valued; acknowledge the differential effects incidents have on different students.
- Encourage or require students to visit office hours early in the term, and use that time to ask about their interests and experiences with course material.
- In class, avoid generalizations that may not include all students. These might include assumptions about life experience, economic means, or future goals.
- Avoid referencing pop culture without providing sufficient orienting context. (This would include making clear whether you’re citing a movie, comic book, band name, etc. so students can learn more if they’re not familiar with the reference.)
- Create structured opportunities for students to provide feedback on their experience of the learning environment and contribute ideas for improving it.

What other ways do you help facilitate students’ sense of belonging in your class, discipline, or professional field? What else could you do?
STRUCTURED INTERACTIONS
Providing or eliciting goals, protocols, processes to make sure group interactions don’t default to patterns of privileging already-privileged voices or otherwise reinforcing systemic inequities

- Develop discussion guidelines or community agreements about interactions during class. (See examples at crlt.umich.edu/examples-discussion-guidelines.)
- Reflect upon those guidelines with students at strategic points throughout the term.
- In facilitated discussions, use strategies for including a range of voices: e.g., take a queue, ask to hear from those who have not spoken, wait until several hands are raised to call on anyone, or use paired or small group conversations to seed larger discussion.
- Give all students time to gather their thoughts in writing before discussing with the whole group.
- Task students to work in pairs or small groups on brief, well-defined activities (with a timeline and specific goals/outcomes).
- When possible, assign student groups/teams or provide criteria for student-formed groups/teams that help leverage diversity and avoid isolating students from underrepresented identities.
- In presentations of group projects, guide students to share speaking responsibilities equitably.
- At the beginning of group or team projects, create time and a process for students to discuss their respective strengths, personal learning goals, anticipated contributions, etc.
- During long-term group or team projects, provide a process for students to reflect upon the team work/dynamics and provide constructive feedback to one another.
- Give students regular opportunities to reflect upon ways their learning has been enhanced by interaction with classmates. This could be as simple as asking them to reflect on their learning at the end of a session with the question, “What did you learn from someone else today?”
- Establish processes for ensuring you’re giving equitable time and attention to each student.

What other strategies do you use to structure equitable and inclusive interactions among and with your students? What else might you do?
CRITICALLY ENGAGING DIFFERENCE

Acknowledging students’ different identities, experiences, strengths, and needs; leveraging student diversity as an asset for learning

- Where relevant, highlight the range of (more and less visible) identities and experiences among the students as assets for learning.
- Reflect upon and share the ways your own identities shape your relationship to your work/the discipline.
- Deliberately choose course materials and activities with a range of student physical abilities in mind.
- Deliberately choose course materials with students’ range of financial resources in mind.
- Invite students to identify examples from their own arenas of knowledge or expertise to illustrate course concepts.
- Use a background questionnaire early in the term to learn about individual students’ past academic experiences, goals, concerns, or other information that would be useful for you to know as their teacher.
- Welcome requests for documented accommodations as a chance to include everyone more fully in learning.
- Communicate concern for students’ well-being, and share information about campus resources (e.g., Counseling & Psychological Services, Sexual Assault Prevention & Awareness Center, Services for Students with Disabilities).
- Ask students for concrete observations about content (e.g., simply describe an image, passage, or diagram) before moving to analytical questions. This can provide everyone a common starting point, highlight students’ different perspectives/approaches, and model analytical processes you want to teach.
- Present course material in a variety of modalities (readings, diagrams, lectures, podcasts) rather than relying on one mode of engagement.
- Try to accompany verbal instructions with a written corollary. (Multiple modes can be helpful to students with processing disabilities as well as non-native English speakers.)

How else do you acknowledge or affirm students’ different identities, strengths, or needs in your courses? What else could you do?
Working with Peer Mentors
TOP TIPS FOR WORKING WITH YOUR PEER MENTOR

- Build a genuine and real relationship based on truth and respect.
- Set clear boundaries and expectations early and revisit often.
- Listen to your peer mentor actively and ask tough questions to followup.
- Develop stretch goals for your peer mentor to build new skills.
- Provide clear and constructive feedback: good and bad.
- Act as the model and demonstrate the Aggie Core Values.
- Focus on making the peer mentor feel relevant and needed in the classroom.
- Create regular meeting time to check in with your peer mentor.
- Have fun and learn from your peer mentor!
- Communicate regularly with your peer mentor and hold to high standards if not meeting expectations.
Hullabaloo U Peer Mentor Instruction Overview

Peer Mentors will receive instruction through online modules within eCampus to replace the in-person training from the Spring. This will provide an overview of what those modules will cover. You can also gain an overview of the resources they are provided by glancing through the Peer Mentor Training Manual on the Repository.

For each topic, mentors will go through Kolb’s Experiential Learning Cycle. This includes:

1. Concrete Experience – doing / having an experience
2. Reflective Observation – reviewing / reflecting on the experience
3. Abstract Conceptualization – concluding / learning from the experience
4. Active Experimentation – planning / trying out what you have learned

Learning Modules:

- What is a peer mentor?
  - Expectations of a peer mentor
  - Role in and out of the classroom
- Resources Available to All Mentors?
  - Using the Peer Mentor Training Manual
  - Exploring the Repository
  - On-Campus Resources to Support Mentors
- Understanding Different Perspectives
- 1:1 Preparation
- Facilitation Tips & Techniques
- Lesson Plan Overviews
- FERPA Training
- Suicide Awareness Training from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
Hullabaloo U Peer Mentor Learning Contract

Peer Mentors are required to complete a learning contract with their instructor.

This learning contract is a plan for achieving specific goals and outcomes during your time as a Hullabaloo U Peer Mentor. The learning contract provides you an opportunity to reflect on your past leadership/peer mentor roles and create specific goals and outcomes that you would like to see during your year as a peer mentor. This learning contract can build upon your past leadership experiences (developing depth in a certain area), competencies or skills you would like to gain for your future professional career, and/or explore new areas of yourself and your skill set that you would like to gain more skill, knowledge or experience in.

Once you have had a chance to reflect and plan/goal set, you will be expected to share your learning contract with your instructor. This ensures that your instructor knows what you are looking to develop through your role as a peer mentor as well as provide a better understanding of the types of things you are excited about and prepared to push yourself to accomplish throughout the year. There will be built in follow up and feedback from your instructor throughout the year (formal and informal).

The Hullabaloo U Peer Mentor Learning Contract should include the following:

• Goal for role as a peer mentor (can utilize SMART Goal format). This goal can be overarching on what you hope to gain from the experience.
  o Specific
  o Measurable
  o Achievable
  o Relevant
  o Time – Oriented

• Outcomes you hope will come from your time as a peer mentor. Should pick between 3-5.
  o Can connect to building upon past leadership experiences
  o Competencies or skills you hope to gain for your future professional career
  o Exploration of personal awareness and skills that you would like to gain for personal expertise

• Specific examples of how you will accomplish the outcomes. Each outcome should have between 3-5 examples.

• Clear example of what you would deem a success once you have finished your role as peer mentor. This can be an overarching statement or list of ways you will now that you have been successful in accomplishing your goal.

• How your instructor can utilize this learning contract to provide stretch assignments or responsibilities. Provide ways that your teaching partner can check in or help you reflect on the experience.

This learning contract is intended to help peer mentors better understand what they expect from their time in the classroom as well as provide a time to set clear expectations for themselves and their instructor. This is a personal learning contract and while your instructor will review this learning contract, the intention behind this exercise is to put pen to paper and write out specific and actionable steps to ensure learning happens in your role as a peer mentor. Peer mentors will need to have their learning contract completed before their August training date and should bring a copy (hard or digital) to their August training date to review with their instructor. All OSS hired peer mentors (Kayleigh Campbell is your supervisor) should send their learning contracts to hullabaloou@tamu.edu by the first day of classes.
A successful learning experience will require a variety of teaching methods. Since Hullabaloo U is a seminar class, lectures should be used sparingly. Lectures are a valid instructional tool, but they are less suited for a seminar. A seminar can be defined as a “meeting for an exchange of ideas.” In the academic course sense, a seminar involves a small group of students engaged in intensive study under the guidance of an instructor who meets regularly with them to discuss the issues at hand. This implies that the instructor’s role is to create a safe, learner-centered environment, where students feel free to learn from and teach their peers. To do this effectively, instructors should utilize a mix of instructional strategies, including large and small group discussions, active learning strategies such as role playing or skits, and beyond-the-classroom learning experiences.

In a chapter on teaching college freshmen, Dianne Strommer offered ten tips for success in teaching first-year college students.

1. Understand your students
2. Clarify your objectives
3. Attend to the first class
4. Establish a climate for learning
5. Abandon the non-stop lecture
6. Involve students with varied activities
7. Provide opportunities for reflection
8. Take risks
9. Include upper-class students (Peer Mentors)
10. Develop a support group

Knowing that teaching a first-year seminar is a unique teaching experience for many educators, in 2001, Stuart Hunter extended Dianne’s work by developing her own “Ten Tips for Success in Teaching First-Year Seminars”

1. Embrace high expectations and demand quality work
2. Learn student names early and use them
3. Demonstrate self-disclosure
4. Give students ownership for some aspects of the course
5. Involve students in teaching the course
6. Remember that process is content
7. Meet at least once with each student individually
8. Obtain feedback throughout the term
9. Provide opportunity for synthesis and projection
10. Know that teaching new-student seminars is a continual work in progress

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Key Questions in Designing a Lesson Plan

When designing a course and/or a lesson plan, consider the following key questions. This chapter will focus on best practices in teaching in learning to help you choose the best methods to achieve your desired outcomes.

1. Who is your audience?

2. What’s the purpose of the lesson? What are you trying to achieve?

3. What are the best methods to help you achieve your desired outcome?
   a. Is the method aligned with the outcome?
   b. What, how, and when will you teach?
   c. How will you incorporate multiple learning styles?

4. How will you know your students “got it?”
Lesson Planning Primer

The FYE Instructor Manual provides you with a myriad of resources to aid you in your instruction. Below, are some additional points to keep in mind as you construct lesson plans for your Hullabaloo U class.

Content Should Always Align with the Outcomes
- Hullabaloo U has common learning outcomes. Use them as your guide in constructing meaningful assignments and experiences within your course.

Prioritie Discussion
- As an instructor it is essential to facilitate invigorating discussions. Encourage and value regular student contributions and make it an expectation early.

Keep Lessons and Activities in 15 Minute Spurts
- Pace is important! Try dividing your plan into increments as this can assist in setting up an engaging format for your students.

Have at Least Two Active Learning Strategies
- Create a learning environment that fosters collaboration and interaction. This moves learning into achieving “understanding, exploration and application” (Garner, 2012).

Have a Backup Plan
- Think ahead! Always plan to have more than what’s needed.
- Contingencies: (weather) - If you’re planning an outdoor activity, have an alternative set-up in case it rains. (technology) – Have a plan if technology is not operational within your classroom to show videos or other forms of media.

Be Organized
- Regularly communicate with your peer mentor on ideas and a plan for the day.
- Bring materials (e.g., PPT slides, supplies).

Take Time for Student Reflection and Connection
- Gauge your students’ understanding and learning after discussions. Leave time for them to process what they’ve learned both individually and collaboratively.

References:
Strategies for Supporting a Successful Learning Experience

1) Involve students in the learning process using active and engaging pedagogy
   Instructors should employ varied and engaging pedagogy in the classroom. Variety in instructional strategies helps to maintain interest and appeals to different learning styles. Specific illustrations of this variable include using a wide array of teaching methods, having meaningful class discussions, using class time productively, and encouraging students to speak in class and work together. According to the literature, benefits of engaging pedagogy include better academic performance, increased retention and graduation rates, and greater satisfaction with the institution and learning environment. Furthermore, engaging pedagogy fosters deep learning, “learning in which students seek to understand the material, incorporate new ideas with existing knowledge and personal experience, to remember it, and to be able to use it” (Erickson & Strommer, 2005, pg.248).

2) Articulate the importance and purpose of each component, topic and assignment – and give timely and clear feedback
   Each activity and assignment should be meaningful and have a clearly stated purpose and set of goals. Students respond best to learning environments in which they understand the purpose and goals of what they are doing, rather than being assigned “busy work” which feels random, pointless, or disconnected from other course content (Erickson & Strommer, 2005).
   Feedback should be provided to students in a timely, constructive, and specific manner. Students should understand why they received a particular grade and what they can do to improve on the assignment. Students should also receive sufficient structure and support to complete their assignments. Frustration can be minimized by giving clear standards and articulating precisely what can be done to improve the assignment.
3) Create a caring and supportive learning environment that helps students build community with the campus, faculty, and students.

One great advantage of Hullabaloo U is that it helps students make connections in their new environment, build community, and have a small group learning experience. The Hullabaloo U course demonstrates a supportive campus environment by providing appropriate resources to students and creating conditions that encourage students to take advantage of these resources. In addition, Hullabaloo U fosters meaningful relationships and connections among students and faculty.

Hullabaloo U also makes the large campus seem smaller. As a result of participating in Hullabaloo U, students should develop a sense of belonging at the University and a sense of community with their classmates since “students are more likely to flourish in small settings where they are known and valued as individuals than in settings in which they feel anonymous” (Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J.H., Whitt, E.J. and Associates, 2005, pg. 106).

Interacting with students, especially outside of the classroom, is important. Research continually suggests that faculty interaction is a vital element of student success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Hullabaloo U encourages meaningful out-of-class experiences that bring students and faculty closer together. Having a shared meal, meeting 1:1, attending cultural events, and engaging in service as a class all serve to build community.

All of these suggestions involve a great deal of time on your part. Good teaching is time consuming. It takes time to create clear, structured, and meaningful assignments. It takes time to provide constructive and specific feedback. And it takes time to be available and approachable for students, but the rewards are well worth the effort.

Works Cited:
Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education

Chickering and Gamson (1987) outlined the following seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education which serve as the backbone of effective practice in Hullabaloo U.

1 **Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact**
   Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students’ intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans.

2 **Good Practice Encourages Cooperation Among Students**
   Learning is enhanced when it is more like a team effort than a solo race. Good learning is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated. Working with others often increases involvement in learning. Sharing one’s own ideas and responding to others’ reactions improves thinking and deepens understanding.

3 **Good Practice Encourages Active Learning**
   Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.

4 **Good Practice Gives Prompt Feedback**
   Knowing what you know and don’t know focuses learning. In getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to perform and receive suggestions for improvement. At various points during college students need chances to reflect on what they have learned, what they still need to know, and how to assess themselves.

5 **Good Practice Emphasizes Time on Task**
   Time plus energy equals learning. There is no substitute for time on task. Learning effective time management is critical for students. Allocating realistic amounts of time means effective learning for students and effective teaching for faculty. How an institution defines time expectations for all of its constituents can establish the basis for high performance for all.

6 **Good Practice Communicates High Expectations**
   Expect more and you will get it. High expectations are important for everyone – for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and well motivated. Expecting students to perform well becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when teachers and institutions hold high expectations of themselves and make extra efforts.

7 **Good Practice Respects Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning**
   There are many roads to learning. People bring different talents and styles of learning to college. Brilliant students in the seminar room may be all thumbs in the labor or art studio. Students rich in hands-on experience may not do so well with theory. Students need the opportunity to show their talents and learn in ways that work for them, while being exposed to other learning styles.

25 Ways to Teach and Learn

1. Lecture – Learning by listening to experts. Bring in experts to talk to students about information (Campus Partner Presentations).

2. Reading – Learning by reading books, pamphlets, magazines, and other material.

3. Writing – Learning by setting down thoughts on paper. This includes journal assignments, blogs, formal papers, written exams, and short, reflective writing on a notecard in class.

4. Inquiry – Learning by initiating personal questions. Ask students to come prepared to class with questions about a topic, reading, or video, etc.

5. Group Discussion – Learning by verbal interaction with other learners.

6. Experience – Learning from an experiential activity or performance. Refer to Kolb’s experiential learning model.

7. Challenge Activity – Learning from a first-time or demanding activity that challenges the learner beyond their present realm of understanding. Consider utilizing an activity that pushes students outside of their comfort zone.

8. Teaching Others – Learning by teaching others or tutoring. Ask students to become an expert in a topic by researching online or through other means, and then prepare them to teach their classmates about the topic.

9. Repetition – Learning by repeating a skill or activity. This is enhanced when students receive meaningful and constructive feedback so that they can improve on their next effort.

10. Question-Answer – Learning from dialogue that involves asking questions and receiving answers. When utilizing this method in class, refer to other students and then your Peer Mentor before answering questions.

11. Simulated Practice – Learning from performance in a safe, controlled situation like a role-play or socio-drama. This is particularly helpful for modeling difficult conversations with a roommate or a faculty member.

12. Socratic – Learning from give-and-take interaction with a teacher, scholar or expert.

13. Failure – Learning from past mistakes and by analyzing past experiences. This also includes learning through trial and error. Many students will utilize this method in their first semester, capitalize on their learning through trial and error by asking students to share challenges and lessons learned in class.

14. Travel – Learning from observing and experiencing new environments, cultures, and languages. This includes field trips and cultural events. Get outside of the classroom and explore the campus and community!
15. **Audiovisual** – Learning from listening to radio, instructional videos, television, and web videos. You can find videos on Hullabaloo U’s YouTube channel. Many instructors utilize Ted Talks, This I Believe Essays, and RSAnimate videos.

16. **Mental Rehearsal** – Learning by using mental practice of skills and information. This includes visualization.

17. **Games** – Learning from games including role-plays, game shows, and other fun activities that support the course learning outcomes.

18. **Case Studies** – Learning by solving problems, discussing life dilemmas, and analyzing cases.

19. **Group Dynamics** – Learning by interacting with a group and experiencing the processes of brainstorming, creative problem-solving, and synergy. Group work is an important aspect of Hullabaloo U, and reflection on the successes and challenges of group work could be very helpful for students.

20. **Reflection** – Learning from quiet thought and contemplation on the past and the future. Engage students in reflection often.

21. **Metaphor** – Learning from pictures or stories that symbolically depict new ideas and concepts.

22. **Interviewing Experts** – Learning by questioning experts about how they became expert. This can be particularly helpful if students interview a faculty/staff member on campus, someone in their desired career path, and/or an upperclassman in their major, etc.

23. **Community Service** – Learning by helping others in the community.

24. **Debate** – Learning by researching and then arguing different sides of the same issue.

25. **Project Method** – Learning by researching, designing, and presenting projects.

Kolb’s Model of Experiential Learning

David Kolb’s (1983) Model of Experiential Learning is a theory of learning that aligns closely with the teaching philosophies of Hullabaloo U. The basic premise of this model is that learning occurs through acquiring and processing information. Kolb posits that each of these functions have two dichotomous methods. We can acquire information in two different ways - through a concrete experience or through abstract conceptualization. We then have to “make meaning” of this new information by processing it, either through reflective observation or active experimentation. For deep learning to occur, a student would utilize all four dimensions of this model to acquire and process the information. We call this “learning around the circle.” This model can be used to work toward achieving course learning outcomes and/or for designing individual class lesson plans.

Active Learning

What is active learning?
Active learning involves some kind of experience or dialogue. Students who are actively learning are reading, writing, discussing, or engaging in problem solving.

Why is active learning important?
“Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing pre-packaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987).

“When students participate in classroom conversation, they become actively engaged with the course material...problems are articulated and potential solutions are generated...opinions are challenged. All of this contributes to the development of critical thinking skills, which is one of our major goals as educators” (McGlynn, 200).

Active Learning Strategies
There are numerous ways to engage students in their learning. The following is a list and description of useful methods for Hullabaloo U:

60-60, 30-30
In this discussion technique, students are asked to find a partner. They decide who is number one and who number two is. Give the groups a topic to discuss. Number one must talk about the topic for 60 seconds without stopping. No questions can be asked during this time. Then student number two must talk about the topic for 60 seconds without repeating the ideas discussed by number one. Again, no questions are asked.

Then, student number one responds or adds to the discussion for 30 seconds. Then, student number two does the same. The instructor asks for volunteers to share ideas with the group. The instructor can facilitate the volunteering by circulating around the room and listening in on the groups. When the instructor hears a good idea, he or she asks the student to report on their ideas at the end of the discussion. This technique works well for reviewing a topic, getting students focused on a new topic, and sharing differing viewpoints.

Case Studies (See Case Method of Instruction later in this chapter)
Case studies are a powerful way to engage students in their own learning. The power comes from the inductive nature of case learning and our attraction to true and well-told stories. Case studies can be accurate descriptions of real-life situations that call for action on the part of the main character. They call for students to step-in and solve the case. This is a good way of bringing the real world into the classroom so that students can practice on real problems. Case studies allow students to disassociate from situations and think about them from outside of a situation they may actually be facing. This can be a particularly valuable learning experience.
since it requires solving problems, discussing life dilemmas, analyzing situations as a group, and gaining insight into different approaches to solving the problem.

**Circle of Voices**
Place your students in either mini-circles of 4-5 or have the whole class get in a large circle. Ask a thought provoking question and allow up to 3 minutes of individual silent time so that students can organize their thoughts—encourage them to jot down an idea or two. Then a student in the circle starts and can say whatever they want (uninterrupted) on the topic for up to 3 minutes. Students take turns speaking by going around the circle. After everyone has had a chance to speak, the discussion opens out into a more free-flowing format. Ground rule: participants are only allowed to talk about others’ ideas, not simply expanding on his/her initial idea; unless someone directly asks him/her.

**Constructive Controversy**
Have students work in groups of four. Within each group, have them split into pairs. Assign pairs opposing sides of a controversial issue. Each pair reads about their “stand” on the issue and then shares with the group. (This is to inform, not debate). After some discussion, have each pair switch sides and then argue the opposing side; debate may now occur.

**Crossing the Line (also known as Stepping In)**
Students receive a sheet with multiple “I” statements. Each student anonymously* indicates whether or not the statements apply to them. All of the sheets are collected and redistributed to the class. Once the papers have been passed out, each statement will be read aloud by the facilitator. Each student will be asked to step in (or raise their hand) if the statement on the paper they are holding has been marked “yes”. This activity can be used to address multiple topics throughout the semester. Two versions appear in the FYE Instructor Manual (Positive Relationships chapter, pg. 13 and Values and Identity chapter, pg. 32).

*This strategy can be completed anonymously or students can represent themselves when crossing the line. As the instructor, you can determine which format will work best for your students.

**Find Illustrative Quotes**
Bring in copies of an article (or any text) you would like your students to discuss. Students spend the first 10 minutes or so reading through the article or portion of a chapter assigned as pre-reading. Have them highlight/underline quotes that they especially agree with, disagree with, find interesting, or find particularly difficult to understand. Whether you discuss in groups or the whole class, students now have something to contribute. They can discuss/question/affirm the points they’ve underlined.

**Fishbowl**
4-6 willing participants are selected to sit in the “hot seat” in the center of the class, where they respond to critical thinking questions about the subject matter that have been passed out either several days in advance, or, at the minimum, given at the start of class with a few
minutes to reflect on. The rest of the class, seated around the students in the fishbowl, critiques the “performance” of the fishbowl students after the session. Repeat with more questions as time allows.

**Forum Theater**
Use theater to depict a situation and then have students enter into the sketch to act out possible solutions. Have students brainstorm possible suggestions for how to improve the situation. Then, ask for volunteers to act out the updated scene.

**Game Shows Trivia**
Take a popular television game show and adapt it to a class topic. You can use PowerPoint to develop your game board to make the activity visual. A game show format will allow your students to have fun and engage with the material outside of the typical classroom experience. It will also provide them greater incentive to learn the material, so that they can compete against their peers to win. A prize for the winning team will be a great incentive.

**Graffiti or Gallery Walk /Rotating Small Groups Stations**
Set up “stations” around the room with newsprint, a poster board, or chalkboard space. Break your class into the same number of stations you’ve set up. Each station should have a prompt on some issue that encourages students to write down their ideas using whatever medium you have provided. After about 5-10 minutes, have the students rotate to the next station, read the prompt, read the “conversation” that has already started, and contribute further to the conversation (by adding content) or affirm components of the conversation (by placing a check-mark next to components they support). The last stop will have students at the station they originated from (so that they can see what their classmates had to say on their initial issue). Process the activity with the large group.

**Variation**
In this variation, there is only one prompt that each group responds to at their station. Upon rotating, one person from each group must stay behind to explain their group’s ideas to the new group. A different person stays behind after each rotation. After visiting each station, each group shares the idea(s) that they liked the most, and then vote on the best idea in the class.

**Hatful of Quotes**
Prior to discussing a text in class, type quotes from the text on to slips of paper. Put these into a “hat” and ask students to draw one of the slips out of the hat. Students are given a few minutes to think about their quote and then asked to read it out and comment on it. This activity is most effective when students share in the order of where the quote can be found in the text. If you use the same 4 or 5 quotes, students who go later will have heard their quote read out and commented on by those who spoke earlier and they can affirm, build on, or contradict a comment a peer has already made about that quote.
**Jigsaw**
Divide the material to be learned into several parts (5 or 6 max). Assign students to “home team” groups (the number of teams equaling the parts of material to be learned: 5 parts = 5 groups). Each member of the “home team” will be assigned one of the parts to be learned. Then, break your class into “expert groups” – all members assigned to “part A” get together, “part B” gets together, etc. In their “expert groups” they gather with the other students assigned the same material. Within these groups, they read, discuss, and thoroughly learn their material. After this, have students return to their “home teams” and “teach” the part they learned to their group.

**Meeting of the Minds Panel**
Set up a panel discussion in which students are assigned to role-play different figures that bring alternative points of view to the discussion topic. This works well with advance preparation. Spending a class period (or two) in which students formulate their points of view on the topic (using resources they, or you, bring to class) really enhances the activity.

**One Minute Paper**
The one minute paper is a free writing response to a question posed by the instructor. The one minute paper can be used at the beginning of class to start a discussion. It can be used in the middle of class to check understanding or get student feedback on key ideas presented in the class. It can be used at the end of the class as a summary activity. You may have volunteers read their one minute paper or call on students to read their papers. Or, the activity can just be for personal reflection. Instructors can occasionally collect the papers for participation credit or use them for discussion.

**Pass the Problem**
Prepare four envelopes with a “problem” or situation that needs a resolution, with the problem written on the outside of each envelope (one problem per envelope). Divide students into five groups with four of the five groups getting small stacks of paper. Each of the four groups gets one problem and has five minutes to develop a solution. They write their solution on a piece of paper, put it in the envelope, and pass it to the next group. The process repeats itself. Each group has five minutes to create a solution without viewing the proposed solution(s) of the group(s) before them. At the end, the fifth group has 5-10 minutes to identify what they think is the best solution for each problem. They present each solution to the larger group and discuss the issue/topic as a class.

**Peer Review**
Students are asked to complete an individual homework assignment or short paper. On the day the assignment is due, students submit one copy to the instructor to be graded and one copy to a partner. Each student then takes their partner’s work and depending on the nature of the assignment gives critical feedback, corrects mistakes, or offers suggestions for future action.
**Pictionary**
This is a helpful activity to review content/ideas. Prepare clues on note cards (keywords, dates, theories, etc. that students should know). Divide students into groups, and assign them to an easel/whiteboard where the clues are located facedown. Once students are in their groups, review the rules: one person will be the artist and attempt to draw the answer without symbols or words; the others try and guess the clue; passing is only allowed twice. Have groups keep a tally of the number of clues they successfully guess. There can set a certain number of clues for the teams to try to complete first, or a time limit. Prizes for the winning team would be appreciated by students.

**Power of Two/Snowballing**
Have students answer a question or solve a problem individually. Then have them pair up and compare their responses. Have them create new responses or improve their original responses. Then have 2 pairs join together to make a group of 4 and repeat. Then have 2 groups of 4 join together to make groups of 8. Then reconvene as a whole class.

**Problem-Posing Strategy**
Submit a problem to students, framed as an open-ended question, to which they must propose and justify an answer. Again, consider current event problems, study strategy problems, etc. (For critical thinking purposes, emphasize different viewpoints.) A great way to do this is to have students write down their “solutions” independently, then break them into groups and have them “round robin” share one solution at a time. They can then discuss the group’s solutions, come up with their top 3 or 5 and share their group’s solutions with the rest of the class.

**Reaction Papers**
After either reading or discussion, have your students respond in writing. You can then have the students read/share ideas from their papers, or you can collect them and anonymously share quotes during the next class period to spark further discussion.

**Recalling a Memorable Experience**
Starting a discussion by getting students to talk about a memorable experience in their lives that somehow connects to the topic is a great way to get your students engaged. Because most students think they are experts on their own experiences, starting out with personal stories is often much less intimidating for them than launching straight into a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of a theory. This can work well with various discussions [the Middle East situation (remembering our 9/11 experiences), media’s influence on society, hurricane Katrina and racism, First Amendment freedoms, etc.]. It also works well when discussing study skills (exam prep, time management, note taking, etc.).

**Response Systems**
Response systems are methods used to engage students in discussion, games, or simulations/role plays by asking them to choose options/answers. The following are common examples:
**ABCD Paddles:** Lettered paddles that students can use to answer multiple choice questions. This is often most effective when students are working in small groups.

**Fact or Crap Paddles:** Each paddle says fact on one side and crap on the other. These are most effective when utilizing a scenario, true/false, or myth-busting activity. These can be used in small groups or individually.

**Poll Everywhere:** On the website, [www.polleverywhere.com](http://www.polleverywhere.com), you can create polls for which students can vote anonymously via their phones. This is a way to collect aggregate information about students’ habits, views, interests, or behaviors, and provides an opportunity to discuss the results. For example, you may poll students on the number of hours they sleep per night on average, and then compare the results with medical recommendations for the number of hours of sleep that college students should get per night, etc.

**Role Playing**
Role playing provides students an opportunity to practice decision making through a concrete experience. Role playing allows for a more active approach to discussing a particular scenario since acting is involved. In this case, there isn’t a character whose dilemma needs to be solved, but the students have to solve the problems as a character in the situation. Provide students a scenario and specific roles in the scenario. Then, provide them the chance to simulate the situation and their solution to it in front of the group. Have the large group discuss the pros and cons to their solution to the situation and potential alternative solutions. This provides students the opportunity to visualize and practice how they would respond to a real-life situation.

**Social Barometer**
This exercise serves well as an icebreaker, stimuli for discussion and critical thinking, establishing an interactive classroom atmosphere, and as a means for forming diverse student groups for class debates and research projects. The exercise may be used for an entire class period and/or periodically for shorter time periods throughout the semester whenever you think the class needs to do something lively and enjoyable.

To set up the exercise, if you have a long, free space for student movement, center yourself facing the entire group of students. If they strongly agree, they will move toward one specified (right or left of you) of the spectrum. If they strongly disagree, they will move to the opposite side of the spectrum. They also are free to situate themselves anywhere in between the
extremes of agreement/disagreement depending on how strongly they feel about the given issue. (If space is limited, use the 4 corners of your room as vectors.)

As the students respond to your questions on why they moved to agree or disagree, they are free to change positions if one of the other students says something that persuades them to modify their original viewpoints. Remember that your function is to keep everyone involved, ensure that students articulate thoughtful reasons for their selected positions, and not allow the discussion to become too personal or rowdy. Once the students get the hang of this exercise, frequently you will only have to ask the first question on a particular topic. They often will maintain a fluid, lively, and respectful dialogue once you get them started.

Begin with a relatively innocuous topic, and then gradually move toward more controversial and even “hot-button” issues. Your key questions in facilitating this exercise will be: “Why do you strongly agree or strongly disagree with this statement?”

When you facilitate this exercise, be sure to call on every student. Make certain that everyone is involved. Often you will play devil’s advocate. Your function is not to promote a particular view so much as to encourage your students, through interested questions, to explain why they literally take a particular position on a particular issue.

When you use this exercise to form groups for other projects, ask the participants to notice who is most similar and most different from them on various issues. At the end of the exercise, ask your students to find two other students most similar to them and link arms – forming a small group of three. Then ask each group of three to find a basically dissimilar group and link arms with those group members – forming a working group of six. This should ensure some lively diversity when they work together on the next selected class project.

**Structured Buzz Groups**

Prepare questions about assigned reading before class. Put students in groups to answer the questions. Although they don’t have to cover all the questions, have them try to finish as many as they can and to record their answers in writing. The groups’ answers are either submitted at the end of class or reported to the reconvened large group to spur further discussion.

**Think, Pair, Share**

“Think, Pair, Share” is a collaborative learning method. It allows students to collect their thoughts about an idea, topic or assignment and discuss their thoughts with someone else before they are called upon to share them in a more public forum (such as the whole class).

The process is simple. Simply ask the group to think of their response to a specific idea or question for a specific amount of time, 60-90 seconds is typically adequate. Then, tell them to write a response to the idea or question. Pair them with a person in the room (usually the person beside them) and ask that they listen to each other’s thoughts and ideas. The goal thus far is to provide the time and support necessary for formulating a reasonable, thoughtful response to a question, as well as to get students in the habit of considering others’ ideas. By
discussing their idea and hearing someone else’s the hope is that a superior idea will be formed.

Students are then asked to share with the large group the discussion they had in their pairs. This provides students with a memory exercise. They learn that if they have thought about it, written about it, and talked about it, they are likely to recall what they thought.

After 4-5 students have spoken, call on someone who has already shared the idea. The response usually is “I have already told you what I wrote.” Then suggest that they have heard 3-4 more ideas and that having already spoken does not mean that they should “stop thinking,” but instead they should be integrating the new thoughts with their thoughts. Students begin to realize that their ideas can be constantly improved upon. This continual conversation leads nicely into the idea that writing papers is also a continuous process of writing, reading, sharing, re-writing, etc.

**Video Clips**

Video clips are extremely successful tools to generate interest and spark discussion. We will be posting videos to our shared resources that you can use. Peer Mentors are fantastic sources of video ideas as well.

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**Active Learning Strategies**

Analyzing the spectrum of some active learning activities arranged by complexity and classroom time commitment.


**Works Cited:**


Guide to Effective Facilitation

Effective facilitation is an important aspect of teaching and learning. Without effective facilitation, it may be difficult for students to understand concepts or engage meaningfully in class discussion or activities. Additionally, “facilitating effective discussions takes forethought, planning, and structure,” (Howard, 2015, p. 3). Therefore the following is a guide for instructors:

Goals of Effective Facilitation

- Each student participates in their own way
- Each student feels welcomed and encouraged to speak
- Knowledge is created and shared (meaning is made from reflection)
- Participants connect previous experiences/content to the activity/discussion
- Participants are engaged in the experience
- The facilitator speaks as little as possible

Requirements for Effective Facilitation

- Connection, respect, and community are built within the group
- Proper tone is established
- An inclusive space is created for participants to talk, actively participate, and be engaged
- Activities/questions are developmentally sequenced and relevant
- Ground rules and expectations are clearly defined

Requirements of an Effective Facilitator

Interpersonal Qualities:

- Confidence
- Flexibility
- Comfort with silence
- Self-awareness (understands strengths, biases, & challenges)
- Passion and enthusiasm

Actions:

- Asks, does not tell
- Use inclusive language and action
- If co-facilitating, create shared goals and expectations, and share responsibilities
- Keep goals in mind. What do you want participants to know, think, or do afterwards?
- Focus on participant learning (Ask “Where are they?” not “How am I?”)
- Allow things to unfold (respond and adapt to what participants say, let participants guide the conversation and make meaning their way)
- Be in the moment, be present, and use what is being said & implied
- Work with the group, not for the group (the facilitator is an active participant)
• Understand the group’s needs, interests, and desires, as well as unique dynamics and identities within the group
• Honor that the group creates knowledge and that the facilitator is not an expert
• Use story-telling, metaphors, or symbolism; relate content to the participants’ personal experiences, the “real-world,” and/or current campus, national, or international events.

Framework for Facilitation of an Activity/Discussion

1 Set goals and prepare for the activity/discussion
   o What do you want to accomplish? What do you want students to think, know, or do after the activity/discussion?
   o Prepare:
     ▪ Develop open-ended questions, and follow-up questions
     ▪ Develop a facilitation plan and alternative activities/methods/questions
     ▪ Practice your facilitation of the activity/discussion
     ▪ Prepare space and supplies

2 Introduce activity/discussion to students by explaining the goals and instructions clearly and specifically
   o Focus the group on the task at hand
   o Explain why you are doing what you’re doing, connect it to the course content and to their experience
   o Set ground rules/expectations of participants
   o Model appropriate behavior by setting a positive and enthusiastic tone and participate with them
   o Ask who is confused with the instructions/purpose, clarify, and address questions

3 Facilitate the activity/discussion
   o Be flexible and adapt to the groups’ responses, questions, or issues; or to any extenuating circumstances
   o Utilize methods that allow everyone to participate (e.g. 60-60-30-30, Social Barometer, Fishbowl, small groups)
   o Ask open-ended questions that don’t have a right answer and are reflective in nature (see “what, so what, now what” framework on following page)
   o Direct the conversation by focusing on the goals you set for the activity/discussion
     ▪ Connect participants’ statements to each other’s and/or the activity/discussion goals
     ▪ Highlight disconnects or disagreement between participants’ statements
     ▪ Respond to participants’ statements...
       • With neutral responses like:
         o Thank you or Okay
• With prodding statements like...
  o *Why do you say that?*; *Tell us more*; or *Explain what you mean*
• By paraphrasing what they said and asking the group to comment
  ▪ If they are not talking:
    • Wait (at least 15 seconds), then...
      o Call on someone
      o Use Think, Pair, Share
      o Rephrase the question
      o Have students write their response, or discuss with a partner, then ask again
  ▪ If you are having trouble controlling the conversation or certain participants are speaking too much:
    • Ask students to raise their hands before speaking
    • Have students write, then share with a neighbor or in small groups
    • Call on students who are not talking, and ask active participants to wait for others to respond

4 Close the activity/discussion
  o Help students make meaning of the activity/discussion by returning to the goals you set out to accomplish by having students discuss or write about:
    • What did I learn today? What is one takeaway I had from today?
    • What was the muddiest/most confusing point today?
    • What will I change as a result of today’s discussion/activity?
    • What will I do with/how will I apply, the information we discussed today?
  ▪ Ask reflective questions using the following framework
    • **What happened?** (*Ask only if the meaning is subjective, or needs to be extracted*)
      o What did we do/experience today?
    • **So what?**
      o Why does it matter?
      o Why did we do this?
      o What was the point?
    • **Now what?**
      o What will we do with this knowledge?
      o How will this experience change things?
Language for Effective Facilitation and Processing

- Ask questions that probe, are open-ended, cause dissonance, and/or serve as the “devil’s advocate”
- Provide space for participants to respond to questions, (wait at least 10 seconds) before reframing the question. Do not answer your own questions.
- When asked a question, return it on the group, by asking, **What do you think?** Do not respond to all participant questions.
- Encourage participants to more deeply explain their comments by saying, “**I don’t understand and tell us more**”
- Turn the onus of responding directly to the facilitator to engaging with the group, by asking participants to, **Talk to each other not to me**
- Use, and encourage students to use, **I Statements**. Share opinions as opinions, things “I” believe, “I” have heard, “I” disagree.
- Often facilitators ask groups if they are ready to move on, and often miss out on the quieter people who are not ready. Give those participants room to speak by asking, **Who is NOT ready to move on?**
- Ask, **What questions do you have?** vs. “Does anyone have any questions?” Phrasing the question this way implies that questions exist.
- “How did this make you feel?” is what facilitators want to know, but is often too broad, consider: **Did anyone feel frustrated?” or “Who felt confused?” and “Why?”**
- Use non-value laden encouragement. When participants respond to questions, do not respond with words like “good,” “right,” or “that’s wrong,” these phrases diminish the ability for participants to disagree. Consider, responding with “**okay** or **thank you**

Utilizing Neutrality in Facilitation

Neutrality is often difficult to convey, because you can’t help having an opinion about what a student says. But, if you learn and practice certain kinds of responses, you will be able to acknowledge someone’s point without revealing your feelings about it. Here are some examples of good neutral responses and some examples of non-neutral responses that should be avoided.

When the Facilitator Agrees with the Statement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neutral Responses</th>
<th>Non-Neutral Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Zelda has made a point. What do the rest of you think?”</td>
<td>“That’s a good point, Joe.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That’s very interesting.”</td>
<td>“Very logical reasoning, Al.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“That’s a possibility.”</td>
<td>“Yes, I can recall some instance like that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Could be.”</td>
<td>“Sounds good to me. How about the rest of you?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Jose feels that we should _____. Are there any other possibilities that we should consider?”</td>
<td>“You’re right.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the Facilitator Disagrees with the Statement

**Neutral Responses**
“How does that strike the rest of you?”
“What do you think of this suggestion?”
“Does anyone want to add anything to that?”
“We have one idea, are there any others?”

**Non-Neutral Responses**
“Yes, but that wouldn’t apply here.”
“There’s not much we can do about a thing like that.”
“That isn’t the point, Lee.”
“I don’t think that’s important. Are there any other ideas?”

**References**

Originally adapted from:
“Tools of Facilitation” by Dr. Jim Street, Appalachian State University 2009
“Presentation and Facilitation” by Adrienne Mojzik and Jaime Shook, EDLP 520, University of South Carolina 2010
*The Leadership Center at Washington State University*
Stimulating Discussion in Class

Classroom discussion is one of the most important features of the first-year seminar, as it provides students the opportunity to learn from one another and normalize the challenges of the first-year experience. “By providing opportunities for students to interact with each other” you create, “bonds of acquaintance and friendship that will facilitate further participation and greater learning” (Howard, 2015, p. 29). Additionally, “discussions support active learning, give instructors feedback on student learning, and can support higher-order thinking” (Immerwahr, 2011). Kuh et al. (2005) found that students learn more through actively participating in discussion than when they merely listen. This helps student’s move from being passive learners to active learners in the classroom.

Brookfied and Preskill (2005) identified the following Fifteen Benefits of Discussion:

1. It helps students explore a diversity of perspectives.
2. It increases students’ awareness of and tolerance for ambiguity or complexity.
3. It helps students recognize and investigate their assumptions.
4. It encourages attentive, respectful listening.
5. It develops a new appreciation for continuing differences.
6. It increases intellectual agility.
7. It helps students become connected to a topic.
8. It shows respect for students’ voices and experiences.
9. It helps students learn the processes and habits of democratic discourse.
10. It affirms students as co-creators of knowledge.
11. It develops the capacity for the clear communication of ideas and meaning.
12. It develops habits of collaborative learning.
13. It increases breadth and makes students more empathic.
14. It helps students develop skills of synthesis and integration.
15. It leads to transformation.

It is important to create a norm of participation/discussion on the first day of class and every day after. To do that:

1. Learn students’ names and encourage them to learn each other’s
2. Respond to students’ comments with positive reinforcement (i.e. show appreciation for their participation)
3. Ask good (analytical) questions (not factual questions with a right or wrong answer)
4. Allow students time to formulate their thoughts/ideas/questions

Jay Howard (2015) also provides the following tips for facilitating effective discussions:

- Help students recognize the value of their classmates’ thoughts and opinions by returning questions to the group and seeking students opinions and ideas often before announcing your own
- Call on students from time to time without them volunteering
• Move about the room and visit small group discussions
• Support debate between students
• Demonstrate self-disclosure by sharing stories that are relevant to the content and helping students find connections with you and their classmates
• Create a safe environment for discussion by supporting students confidence development through affirmative statements after they contribute
• Explain to students that discussion is valuable for their learning

While discussion is important, at times, “discussions can be uncomfortable for students, time consuming, and difficult to control or keep on topic,” and while, “students say that they like class discussion,” it is often “hard to get them to engage.” Immerwahr (2011) believes that while students want to participate, there are often obstacles in place that prevent them from doing so, and that instructors need to understand those obstacles in order to overcome them. Below, you find a chart that outlines these common obstacles and provides some strategies to combat them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student obstacles to participation</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Not interested in the material.   | • Choose material that engages students/is relevant to their experience.  
|                                   | • Maintain sensible reading to discussion ratio. Don’t assign vast amounts of material when there is not time to discuss it in class. |
| Didn’t do assignment/reading.     | • Set reasonable goals, it’s better to assign fewer pages that students actually read.  
|                                   | • Maintain accountability. Develop some way (such as quizzes or reflection papers) to hold students accountable for doing reading. |
| Didn’t understand the assignment, and didn’t really understand why we asked them to do it. | • Develop preparation materials, with study questions, and specific guides for what students should be looking for.  
|                                   | • Show students how readings and assignments connect to the course learning outcomes. |
| Afraid of being "put down" by teacher. | • For better or worse, these students have come up through the self-esteem movement. Treat comments respectfully and respond neutrally.  
|                                   | • Let students respond to other student’s comments before you do.  
|                                   | • Don’t ask questions that have a right or wrong answer. |
Fear of other students. Students are scared of us, but terrified of each other. This fear kicks in most when a teacher addresses a question to the whole class, expecting a student to volunteer an answer.

- If the question is easy, the fear is that other students will think the student who answers is a "suck up."
- If the question is difficult and the student gets it wrong, the fear is that other students will think the answerer is a dumb suck up.

A suggestion: "Don't ask a question if you already know the answer." If you know what you want, why don't you say it? Instead, favor questions that have many answers that you don't already know, are open-ended, and are subjective. For example:

- What does this mean to you?
- How would you apply this?
- What is an example of this?
- How would you compare this to another idea you have heard?

Deer in the headlight. "By the time I think of something to say, the discussion has moved on, so I prefer to just listen."

- Use silence. Allow time for students to think before letting them talk. Don't call on the first person who raises a hand, say, "just take a few moments to think about this."
- Ask students to discuss ideas with a person next to them before soliciting discussion, or ask students to jot down some ideas before starting discussion.

Afraid of follow-up. Students are afraid that if they volunteer something, the teacher will follow up with a probing question, putting the student on the spot for more information.

- Repeat and rephrase the student's comment. Address follow-up question to the whole class, not to the person who said it. "Mike says that Descartes must be wrong, because he knows he is sitting in this room right now. Can anyone anticipate how Descartes might respond?"

Students may be shy and lack confidence.

- Let students get support from other students. For example, divide students into groups of three with one student in each group as "talker" for the group and others as "consultants." Only talkers can talk, but give frequent opportunity for talkers to consult with consultants. Rotate roles after a few minutes.
- Reward non-talkers when they do talk. Use their comment for your next point, or thank them after class for their contribution.
- Use role play exercises. Shy students get confidence from playing a role with an assigned part.
| Students are too sleepy or groggy to participate (especially early morning or late afternoon classes). | • Deal with the issue explicitly. Take breaks in the middle of class, where students can stretch.  
• Direct questions to individual students, rather than waiting for students to volunteer.  
• Have students’ stand-up, move to another part of the room, or form groups to foster conversation.  
• Start with an engaging activity that spurs discussion.  

Discussion dominating students can be a problem for the rest of the class, especially if they get the teacher "off track." Other students will clam up because they don’t want to cause more chaos and they don’t want to make other students angry at them. | • Deal appropriately with discussion dominators. Don’t spend a lot of time dealing with non-mainstream questions. Talk to dominators outside of class, and let them know that you value their input but you might sometimes need to ask them to hold back to let other students have a chance. Often discussion dominators are seeking attention, so if you give them some attention outside of class, they may be more appropriate during class sessions. |

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**Socratic Teaching as a Means to Foster Discussion**

Socratic teaching is revered as the oldest, most powerful model for developing critical thinking. This teaching model, established by Socrates more than 2,500 years ago, emphasizes the importance of seeking evidence, closely examining reasoning and assumptions, and analyzing basic concepts. With Socratic teaching, the focus is on providing students with questions, not answers, by modeling inquiry and probing. As a result, students develop the ability to reason in a disciplined, self-assessing manner. Students also benefit by communicating with their peers in the classroom setting.

This teaching model is valuable in the Hullabaloo U classroom, where the goal is to create a student-centered environment, where students take responsibility for their own learning. The goal of Socratic teaching is for students to internalize a mode of questioning that suits their learning style and enables them to achieve higher levels of realization and understanding.

These modes of questioning are:

- **Clarity.** For example, the student might ask, “Could you elaborate further?” or “Could you give me an example?”
- **Accuracy.** “How can we verify your statements?”
- **Precision.** “Could you be more specific?”
- **Relevance.** “How does this relate to the issue?”
- **Depth.** “What other factors need to be considered?”
- **Breadth.** “Do we need to consider another point of view?”
- **Logic.** “Does what you say follow from the evidence?”
- **Significance.** “Is this the most important issue to consider?”
In order to achieve the goal of the Socratic teaching model, instructors should:

1. Make an environment conducive to discussion. Develop a base relationship among the class members before expecting extensive participation in discussion. Students are more likely to participate if they feel they are among friends. Facilitating activities that help students learn each other’s names and interests can do this. The instructor should also learn all the students’ names and take some time to chat with them individually and informally. If possible, arrange the seating in the room into a semicircle so that all class members can see one another.

2. Keep the discussion focused by providing questions that advance the discussion. These questions should not only stimulate student thinking, but also hold students accountable for their thinking. Plan ahead for the many different directions that the dialogue might take, and be prepared to think on your feet. However, limit your own comments. The discussion should be about the students developing their own answers and solutions.

3. Keep the discussion intellectually responsible by dealing carefully and fairly with contributions from every member of the class. Show respect for each student’s thoughts and opinions. By modeling this behavior as the instructor, students will also show respect for their peers’ thoughts and opinions.

4. Stimulate the discussion with probing questions (“what,” “how,” and “why” questions are open-ended and further discussion; “can,” “are,” and “do” questions are closed). When modeled by the instructors, stimulating questions become internalized by students, who in turn ask themselves the same things.

5. Periodically summarize what has and what has not been dealt with or resolved in regards to the topic of discussion. This provides participants in the discussion with a road map to guide the rest of the dialogue.

6. Incorporate as many students as possible into the discussion. If everyone feels that his or her contributions to the discussion are valued and respected, participation will come more naturally.

7. Take a nonjudgmental attitude, listen, share something of yourself, and be honest. All of these things will contribute to critical rapport-building with your students, and affect future discussions.


Johnston, Kevin, "Creating Effective Discussions: a Bibliography," Michigan State University Teaching Assistant Programs.


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Creating Meaningful and Engaging Assignments

Instructors should:

- Provide a strong rationale/purpose for the assignments to their students
- Ensure that the rigor and amount of work matches the number of credit hours earned (these are primarily 0-1 credit hour experiences). Use assignments sparingly to reinforce major course outcomes.
- Seek the buy-in and support of their Peer Mentor on their assignments
- Allow student choice in how they complete their assignments and/or encourage students to develop components of the assignment as a class
- Provide timely, constructive, and meaningful feedback on each assignment
- Build a strong community in their classroom and leverage assignments to support that community
- Model successful work by sharing good examples of student work or the Instructor/Peer Mentor's work

Meaningful assignments include:

- Reflection (e.g. informal writing, reflective components in all assignments, reflective and cumulative final projects)
- Opportunities for students to apply their learning (in particular, to being a successful student at Texas A&M)
- Beyond-the-classroom expectations/requirements (e.g. engagement experiences, interviews, visiting the library and/or career center)
- Products students could be proud of/want to share with others (e.g. videos, blogs, presentations)
- Clear structure and support from the instructor on how to complete the assignment successfully (e.g. rubrics, examples of good work, class time to discuss/develop skills)
- Opportunities for students to work together and get to know each other (personality or learning style assessments, opportunities for self-disclosure (e.g. lifelines), assignments that require students to work together in groups in and/or outside of class)
Designing Engaging Assignments
(Exams, Projects, Papers, Presentations, etc.)

Content
- Knowledge is objective
- Knowledge is subjective
- Instructor determines what is important
- Students make meaning
- Multiple choice/True false
- Students help determine which information is important to know
- Memorization/Regurgitation
- Open-ended

Motivation/Relevance
- For sake of a grade
- Busy work
- Check a box to get it done
- Not relevant to course learning outcomes
- Interested in project
- Would want to keep it
- Make an impact/Leave a legacy
- Connected to multiple learning outcomes

Choice
- Instructor dictates all aspects & topics
- Students have options on how to complete the assignment
- Students have options on which assignments to complete

Structure/Guidelines
- All done at one time
- No status updates
- Vague descriptions
- Broken into chunks
- Timeline given
- Clear & concise rubric
Methods for Assessing Student Learning

Informal

Admit Cards
Reaction Cards
Journals
Blogs
Reflections
One Minute Papers
Exit Cards
Learning Logs
Observations
Class Discussion
Casual Conversation
Game Shows

Formal

Interview Reports
Student Engagement Plan
Formal Essays
Research Papers
Essay Exams
Portfolios
Group Research Presentations
Videos/Digital Productions

Reflection Papers
Response Papers
Summaries
Blackboard/Discussion Board Postings
Oral Presentations
Annotated Bibliographies
Peer Teaching/Evaluation
Case Studies/Simulations
Posters/Dioramas
Demonstrations
Cooperative Learning Groups

Informal assessments ask students to demonstrate, and reflect on, their learning, require little structure or feedback, focus on the content of the product vs. the quality, and may not be graded.

Formal assessments require students to apply higher order learning skills (analyze, evaluate, create), require more structure and feedback from the instructor, may focus on the quality of the product as well as the content, and will have a significant impact on the course grade.
Providing Feedback to First-Year Students

The primary function of grading is to communicate as accurately as possible the extent to which students have learned what the course was designed to accomplish. Understanding this, the goals of providing feedback are to...

- improve performance and academic success
- increase interest and motivation to learn
- illuminate and undermine misconceptions
- promote self-assessment
- develop independence

The order in which we give feedback matters, so when providing feedback, do so in the following order:

1. What was done well
2. What still needs improvement
3. What can be done to improve it

Also, consider the following tips:

- When grading assignments, ask yourself, “What does this learner need from me at this time?” Shape your comments accordingly.

- Grade according to predetermined standards and make those standards explicit at the outset (with a rubric or by providing an example of an “A” product). Students are more likely to achieve high standards if they know what those standards are.

- Speak to the learner, not the error. Focus on what the student has achieved and what might yet be achieved.

- Praise the student for the progress made, indicate what needs to be done, and give advice to the student about how to do those things.

- Up to a point, more comments, and more specific comments lead to greater learning. There are three kinds of qualifications to this statement:

  a) A student can be overloaded with feedback. There are a limited number of things a student can be expected to learn and remedy at one time.

  b) Motivation for improvement is affected by the balance of encouragement versus criticism. Feedback can be either helpful or detrimental. A heavy dose of criticism may cause a student to quit trying to improve.

  c) The type of comment makes a difference. Simply noting errors is not helpful if the student doesn’t know how to correct the errors. Helpful comments provide guidance about how to improve.
Best Practices in Grading and Providing Feedback

- If student work does not meet your expectations, first consider if your expectations were clear. Test your assignments by sharing them with students outside of your class, or peers, and try to complete the assignment yourself.

- Assign students work early and often during the semester, and provide timely and appropriate feedback on all of those assignments.

- Provide students adequate structure and support for completing assignments successfully. This may include providing a rubric, sharing examples of high quality work, and/or facilitating lesson plans that help students develop the skills they need to be successful.

- Feedback on assignments must be timely and specific, and should include praise, constructive strategies for improvement, and questions to encourage further thinking.

- Feedback must justify the student’s grade and should match the level of effort students put into the assignment.

- Feedback should not overwhelm students. Focus on what is important, fixable, and within in the scope of the purpose of the assignment. For example; are students learning to write or writing to learn, or is this a formal or informal assignment?

- If all else fails, remember TRU DAT. Feedback should be:
  - Timely
  - Relevant
  - Understandable
  - Digestible
  - Accurate
  - Thought-Provoking

References:
Angelo, T. (2013, October). Effective and efficient ways to assess first-year students’ learning. Presented at the Institute on Effective Teaching and Learning, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.
Sample Assignments

Sample Informal Writing Assignments
Informal writing provides students the opportunity to write to learn. These assignments are often short, reflective, and personal. The following are examples of informal writing that are appropriate for Hullabaloo U:

Admit Cards
Ask students to come to class with a question about a topic, a chapter summary, or an answer to a question about the reading. The purpose of such an assignment is for students to demonstrate that they have prepared for the class. Admit cards might be used merely as a record of attendance, or more substantively, as an assessment of students’ preparation, an alternative to a quiz.

Reaction/Reflection Cards
Have students write a brief reflection on a reading assignment, in-class activity or discussion, or beyond-the-classroom experience like a cultural event on an index card. This is a helpful method to gauge student interest in, understanding of, and reactions to class content.

The One-Minute Paper
The purpose of a “one-minute paper” is to provide an opportunity for individuals to focus their attention and organize their thoughts. The title is a bit of a misnomer – you may give students up to 5 to 10 minutes to write a response to “prompts.” Often these papers lead to questions, promote class discussions, provide for reflection, and improve writing on exams. Examples of appropriate occasions to use “one-minute paper” exercise include:

- Prior to a class discussion about an assigned reading
- After a short lecture on a specific concept or particularly difficult idea
  - At the end of a class period
  - Prior to the start of a project (after the assignment directions have been given)

Usually not graded, or considered part of the attendance grade for the day, these assignments are used to discover how well students understood the material, to determine the usefulness of an assignment, to encourage writing/critical thinking, to see if students understood the point, and/or to learn more about students.

Sample prompts include:
- What was the most valuable thing you learned during this class/session?
- What question(s) remain in your mind as we end this session?
  - What was the “muddiest” point in this session? (In other words, what was least clear to you?)

Journals/Blogs
Journals may take a variety of forms, including blogs, e-mail, joint group or class products, or traditional handwritten notebooks. Following are sample assignment descriptions:

*Journal/Blog/eCampus posting:* Throughout the semester, students will write three informal reflections on course experiences. Writing prompts will be provided. These reflections will be graded primarily for
completion and demonstrated effort, and should be emailed/posted to eCampus by the beginning of class on the date indicated on the course calendar.

Below are sample prompts that can be used in your class. They are arranged by topic and can be adjusted as needed for your students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Strategies</th>
<th>What is the hardest class you are taking this semester? What are you doing to be successful in the course?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tell me about the other classes you are taking this fall. How are things going? Have you had any grades from tests and papers? If so, are you doing as well as you expected? Also, what challenges is the course presenting you and what are some strategies you use to overcome them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>What are some general perceptions about alcohol and college life? Is there more or less drinking going on than you thought? Why do you think freshmen engage in drinking at a greater rate than other students? Lastly, if you choose to drink, what are some ways you can do so safe and responsibly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Resources</td>
<td>What are some of the campus resources you learned about and used this semester? How have they helped you in your transition to the University?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
<td>What is your dream job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Look ahead to your graduation four or five years from now-what do you want your Aggie legacy to be? What would you like to contribute to the Aggie community? How are you planning on achieving these things?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement/Engagement</td>
<td>Tell me about a club or organization you have gotten involved with on campus. What are you learning as a result of your involvement? How is it going to help with your future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Relationships</td>
<td>Who is a faculty member you would like to get to know this semester? How do you plan to build a relationship with this individual? Does anything about getting to know a faculty member cause you anxiety? If so, what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who is your favorite new person you have met at Texas A&amp;M?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was the most meaningful compliment you have ever received? Who gave it to you? When was it given? Why was it meaningful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Looking back on this semester, what are 3 lessons you have learned? What would you do differently if you had the ability to go back in time? Did you make any decisions that made you feel proud? If so what were they? What advice would you give to the incoming students next Fall?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Please assess your personal satisfaction with your time management thus far. Discuss one strategy you’ve used to successfully manage your time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent is the way you spend your time aligned with your most important values? What have you learned about managing time, and what is an example of how you have succeeded in managing your time?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Why did you choose to come to Texas A&amp;M? What are your hopes? Fear? What do you think of life after high school so far?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What aspects of college are you most looking forward to throughout your first year?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is the culture here in College Station different from where you are from?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has college been going so far? In other words, how are you adjusting to life at Texas A&amp;M? Are there any challenges that you’ve faced? What are you most proud of so far? What are you most excited about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition/Mid-Term</td>
<td>Now that you have been in college for a month, please reflect back and describe how things are going, both academically and socially. Also, how is college measuring up against your expectations that you had before you arrived?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values/Identity</td>
<td>What are your thoughts on the topic of diversity? How comfortable are you discussing diversity issues such as race, gender, or sexual orientation? Does any particular issue cause you more discomfort? Why? What is the importance of discussing this in Hullabaloo U?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While at Texas A&amp;M have you met/worked with anyone who came from a different cultural background than you? What did you learn about yourself through this interaction?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Self-Disclosure Assignments (to aid in Community Building)**

Refer to the Self-Disclosure Activities in the Community Building section. Some require out-of-class preparation so may need to be listed as an assignment.

**Campus Resources Assignments**

“Do You Know” Presentation

Each student (or in pairs) will be responsible for preparing a brief “Do You Know” Presentation which will be shared with classmates at the beginning of each class period starting with the third week of class. For this activity, you will research a University office, program, resource or opportunity and educate your classmates on this topic or area (2 minutes). This will be a way we can learn about all the University has to offer students. You should utilize your *New Student Handbook* text and Texas A&M web pages to find the appropriate information. Personal experience with the office/program/resource/opportunity (visiting in person, asking questions of a staff member associated with that area) is highly encouraged though not required.
Academic Success Strategies Assignments

Academic Success Strategies Activity:
One goal of this class is to help you be successful in your other academic courses. In order to help foster habits and behaviors that lead to academic success, you will be required to earn 60 points by choosing activities from the list below. You do not need to do all the activities on the list, but you do need to accumulate 60 points over the course of the semester (in any combination you choose). Evidence (paper, confirmation slip, etc.) is due one week from when you attend event or complete task.

**Earn 60 more points from the list below.**

- _____ Visit a professor for another class during office hours (10 points per professor) – bring signature from professor
- _____ Attend an SI session (10 points each) – bring signature from SI leader
- _____ Type your notes for one of your classes (10 points per week)
- _____ Make study guide for one of your exams (10 points)
- _____ Make an outline for a chapter in one of your textbooks (10 points)
- _____ Create flash cards to prepare for an exam (10 points)
- _____ Take a paper for another class to the Writing Center for review (10 points)
- _____ Attend an Academic Success Center coaching session - bring signature from ASC Coach (10 points)

**Time Management Logs**
During the semester you will complete two different experiential logs that detail how you are using your time. More details will be provided in class. Bring your log with you to class on the assigned date ready to discuss.

**Sample Final Projects**

**Example 1:**
Select one question from each of the following two categories.

I. PERSONAL REFLECTION (Choose 1)
a. Reflect on the Lifeline activity that you completed during the first week of class. If you were to create a Lifeline now, what would you include? What have been the most influential events of your semester? What challenges have you faced? What successes have you celebrated?

b. Reflect on the person that you were when you first entered Hullabaloo U. How are you a different person now? In what ways have you changed? Has your growth been positive? What factors have influenced your growth this semester?

II. COLLEGE SUCCESS RESOURCES (Choose 1)
a. If you had a friend who was having trouble in their classes (e.g. not performing well on tests; struggling with understanding the information; getting low scores on submitted assignments) what resources would you recommend to them? What academic support resources at Texas A&M have you found to be helpful to your academic success? Why?
b. The University sets high academic expectations and there are many people in place to support you along the way. It is primarily up to YOU, however, to take responsibility for your academic success. Identify and describe 4-6 steps to academic success at Texas A&M. What plan do you have to ensure that you succeed in college?

Example 2:
Please write a letter to next year’s freshman class. Your letter must include all of the following: (1) the letter must be dated, (2) it must begin “Dear Freshman,” (3) it may not exceed one typed pages written in an easy, friendly style, paying attention to correct grammar, spelling, etc. and (4) it is due at our last meeting. Consider including the following:

Introduction: You should introduce yourself to next year’s freshmen, explaining briefly where you are from and why you chose Texas A&M. Explain one or two new things you have discovered about yourself during this semester.

Transitions: What were the most difficult transitions in your move from high school to college? You might want to focus on life in the residence hall, meeting new people, roommates, adjusting to stress levels, money management, etc. In the process, consider ways in which Texas A&M, fellow students, Hullabaloo U, parents, or faculty/staff members have helped you make the transition.

Academic Success Strategies: Discuss your level of academic readiness to succeed in college. To what extent are you prepared for success in college? What might you need to work on, or what skills might you need to develop.

Discovering Texas A&M Resources: Another goal of our course has been to help you discover the full range of educational opportunities, university resources, and support services. Briefly explain to next year’s freshmen what Texas A&M has to offer in the way of opportunities, resources and support.

Plan for next semester: The first semester of college is a time of growth, exploration, trial and error, struggles, joys, etc. Now that you have a semester of college under your belt, what have you learned that you will need to do differently next semester? What changes do you want to make in your life as a college students and how do you plan to make these changes? This can be in the form of advice about what new students need to understand in order to be successful in college.

Example 3:
Design and deliver a creative presentation reflecting on and synthesizing your experiences during your first semester at Texas A&M. The presentation will be given to the class on the day of the Final Exam, and must be no longer than 2 minutes in length. The way you present is up to you: PowerPoint, video, poster board, interpretive dance, graphic novel, etc. However, the following messages must be conveyed during your time:

- **Introduction.** Who are you? Where did you come from? Why did you come to Texas A&M?
- **Transition.** Describe your first semester of college. What were your first thoughts moving onto campus? What are your favorite memories from your first semester? Where did you find challenges and struggles?
• **Academic Strategies.** Transitioning from high school to college can be difficult. How did you make the academic transition? What Texas A&M resources did you utilize to help you become a successful college student?
• What is your favorite part of being a student at Texas A&M?
• **Plan for next semester.** What have you learned about yourself this semester? How will this new knowledge help you in the years to come? What is one suggestion you have for incoming students next year?

**Example 4:**
To reflect on this semester and to prepare you for your next 3+ years, you will create something that exemplifies your experience in college so far. It should display what you have learned this year both in and outside of class and how that learning will influence the rest of your time in college.

This project is due in class, where you will share and describe your project with your classmates for 2 minutes. Your project will be graded for demonstrated effort, depth of reflection, connection to the course learning outcomes, and depth of goal setting. Your project must incorporate the following two components:

1) What you have learned about yourself this semester both in and outside of Hullabaloo U. What events, moments, and people have shaped your experience? What successes and failures have been influential this semester/year?

When responding to this prompt, consider what it means to YOU to be successful academically, to be an Aggie, to be healthy and involved on campus, and to be a responsible and engaged citizen.

2) How do you plan to apply the lessons you have learned, in and outside of Hullabaloo U, to your future in higher education? Discuss what you have learned about yourself and how that has shaped your goals and aspirations for the remainder of your college experience. What will you do? Who will you associate with? What groups/organizations will you join? What changes will you make? What will you continue to do? Focus on your academic success, your role as an Aggie, your health, and your campus and local citizenship. Set goals for the remainder of your career and consider; what will you need to accomplish so that you know you have had a successful college experience?

You will create or compile any tangible object that best demonstrates what you have learned and how that influences your plans for the future. If your creation doesn’t explicitly demonstrate what you’ve learned and what your goals are, please write a 1 page explanation of your project, to be turned in when you share your project with the class.

*Possible projects:*
• Updated Lifeline
• Video
• PowerPoint or Prezi
• Letter to your future self (2+ pages)
• Letter to incoming students (2+ pages)
• Drawing, painting, collage, scrapbook or diorama
• Collection of songs or YouTube clips (explanation required)
• Song or poem you’ve written (explanation required)
• Journal entries (2+ pages)
Collecting Feedback During the Semester

Mid-semester feedback serves as “a formative evaluation tool that allows for changes while a course is in progress” (Hayward, 2002) and is used to improve performance.

Benefits
- Provides an instructor with information that can be used to make changes in teaching styles and strategies during the course.
- Student suggestions may lead to new assignment and activity ideas for the instructor.
- Can build student confidence because they receive the signal that their instructor is committed to the course and is open to making changes that can directly affect them.
- Can increase student engagement in a class they “help build.”

What to do with the information
- Make appropriate changes to the syllabus, future activities, and assignments.
- Results should be shared with students one or two class periods after the information was collected to highlight the value of student feedback.
- If some suggestions are not feasible, explain to the students why. Remember, honest communication is key to effective feedback.
- It is best to not solicit feedback during a class period where graded work is being returned. The scores students receive are fresh and may strongly impact comments on the evaluation form. Explain to the students it is their responsibility to help shape the course and their feedback will help the instructor to make improvements.

Feedback collection methods
- Anonymous evaluation forms
- One minute paper or feedback notecard
- Journal entries
- One-on-one meetings with students
- Review/editing of the course calendar individually or in small groups
- Class check-in activities

Mid-semester feedback prompts
- What are three things that the instructors should start doing, stop doing, and continue doing for the remainder of the semester to make this class a positive experience?
- What have been the most valuable and least valuable aspects of the course so far? How can the course be improved?
- What have been the most valuable things you have learned so far in Hullabaloo U?
- What do you still hope to learn from this course that we have not yet covered?
- What have your instructors been doing well? How can they improve?
- If you could start this class over again, what three things would you have done differently and why?

Adapted from: Hayward, P.A. “Developing Ourselves through the Use of Mid-Semester Evaluation.”
Seeking Anonymous Formative Feedback on a Notecard

There are a variety of ways to solicit mid-semester feedback from your students. One technique uses index cards as a means of collecting anonymous feedback. This method provides a class temperature, while also offering an opportunity to build additional trust and openness within the class. This kind of open-ended evaluation will not serve as a definitive guide for reconstructing a syllabus, but it can provide you with an idea of where students are, how they view the course, and what their expectations are for the semester. It will also give you an idea as to what students might need clarification on, what activities they like or dislike, and what techniques are working or not working to make the class more engaging.

Instructions:

1. Provide each student with (2) 3 x 5 index cards. On the first card ask students to list two things, topics, or activities that they particularly like about the course. On the second card, ask students to list two things that they don’t like about the course.

Remind students that all of this information is anonymous and ask students to not put their name on the cards. Ask students to be as specific as possible—the more they elaborate on WHY they like or dislike an activity, the more benefit it will be to you.

2. Collect the cards and briefly read the non-repetitive comments to the class. Focus just as much time on the complaints as to the positive statements. The important part of this activity is to show your class that you care about and are interested in their feedback. As you are reading out loud make sure to acknowledge the importance of each statement, either by nodding your head or making a short comment. Sometimes no comment will suffice. Just make sure to not dismiss the student comments as trivial or argue against them in any way.

3. The final step is to ask students for input for the remainder of the semester. What do they still need to know more about and how can this information be delivered most effectively? Have students write their suggestions on the last index card. Again, read some of the suggestions aloud to the class.

4. Most importantly: follow-up. Make sure you do something with this feedback, whether that is incorporating suggestions into the syllabus for the second half of the semester, or adjusting your teaching style appropriately.
**Sample Mid-Semester Evaluation Forms**

**Instructor**  
The instructor is approachable.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

I would feel comfortable speaking to the instructor about a problem related to my schoolwork.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

I would feel comfortable speaking to the instructor about a problem related to my personal life.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

The instructor treats students with respect.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

The instructor motivates me to do my best work.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

The instructor is accessible during class and office hours.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

The instructor cares about whether or not you learn something.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

The instructor’s expectations of student performance are:  
   a. Too high  b. Appropriate  c. Too low

The feedback the instructor provides on student progress is:  
   a. Very useful  b. Somewhat useful  c. Not useful

**Peer/Graduate leader**  
The Peer Mentor is approachable.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

I would feel comfortable speaking to the Peer Mentor about a problem related to my schoolwork.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree

I would feel comfortable speaking to the Peer Mentor about a problem related to my personal life.  
(1) strongly disagree (2) disagree (3) neutral (4) agree (5) strongly agree
The Peer Mentor treats students with respect.  
(1) strongly disagree  (2) disagree  (3) neutral  (4) agree  (5) strongly agree

The Peer Mentor motivates me to do my best work.  
(1) strongly disagree  (2) disagree  (3) neutral  (4) agree  (5) strongly agree

**Course Content**
What are the most beneficial aspects of the course?

What are the least beneficial aspects of the course?

What idea/concept discussed so far has been most difficult and/or most interesting to learn for you? Why?

**Student Contributions**
In this course I am performing:

a. Up to my potential  
b. Almost up to my potential  
c. Below my potential

Do you ask questions or make comments in this class?  
Never  Seldom  Occasionally  Frequently

What would encourage you to participate more?

Your classmates make responsible contributions to the class.  
(1) strongly disagree  (2) disagree  (3) neutral  (4) agree  (5) strongly agree

**General**
What aspects of class are **working well**? What are the strengths of the class? What aspects of the class are having a positive impact on your learning?

What aspects of the class are **working poorly**? What are the weaknesses of the class? What aspects of the class are having a negative impact on your learning?

What aspects of the class do you believe **should be changed**? How should these aspects be changed? (Please be as specific as possible).
Soliciting Feedback from Your Peer Mentor

Your Peer Mentor’s feedback is an important aspect of the success of the course. In addition to the role they play in mentoring first-year students and co-teaching the course, these “veteran” students are a source of feedback about our teaching and the success of course in meeting first-year student’s needs. They are enrolled in many other courses at Texas A&M and have seen examples of both good and not-so-good teaching. We strongly encourage instructors to seek feedback about course design, teaching strategies, and teaching performance from their peer/graduate leader regularly. Here are a few ways you might solicit this feedback and some general principles about this method:

1) It is critical to establish trust and open-communication in order to get thoughtful and honest feedback. You must demonstrate that you truly want to know how things went before a Peer Mentor will feel comfortable sharing this information. They are sometimes hesitant to tell it as it really is for fear of hurting our feelings.

2) After each class, spend a few minutes with your Peer Mentor debriefing how the course went. Are there recommendations for improvement the next time you teach this lesson? Are there general thoughts about the level of engagement in the discussion or ways to get better involvement from your students?

3) Ask your Peer Mentor to gather feedback from your students about ways to improve the course.

4) Just as you provide feedback to your Peer Mentor at the end of the semester, encourage your Peer Mentor to provide you feedback about your teaching or the course. You may create a list of questions to respond to or provide some rating-scale items.

5) Meet weekly to discuss the direction the course is going and update lesson plans and assignments as necessary to improve the course/respond to student needs.
PROPOSED End-of-Term Course Evaluation\textsuperscript{1} Items\textsuperscript{2} for FYE Sections

1. What portion of the class preparation activities (e.g., readings, online modules, videos) and assignments did you complete?

   1. less than 25%
   2. 25% to 50%
   3. 51% - 75%
   4. Over 75%

2. I understood what was expected of me in the course.

   1. Expectations were not at all understood\textsuperscript{3}
   2. Expectations were somewhat understood
   3. Expectations were moderately understood
   4. Expectations were understood
   5. Expectations were extremely well understood

3. Please rate the organization of this course.

   1. Not at all organized
   2. Somewhat organized
   3. Moderately organized
   4. Organized
   5. Extremely organized

4. In this course, I encountered diverse views, debates, or controversies, which contributed to my learning.

   1. Not at all
   2. Sometimes
   3. Frequently

5. The instructor fostered an effective learning environment.

   1. Not at all effective
   2. Somewhat effective
   3. Moderately effective
   4. Effective
   5. Extremely effective

6. The information provided during this course helped my transition to TAMU.

   1. Extremely helpful
   2. Helpful
   3. Somewhat helpful
   4. Not at all helpful

\textsuperscript{1} For faculty members, the items would not replace any departmental or college-level standardized items but would be in additional to any other required items.

\textsuperscript{2} The first 5 items are currently under consideration as standardized items to be used across all courses offered at TAMU

\textsuperscript{3} For each item, students will be prompted to provide additional information/explanation or suggestions that would have made the learning experience more positive (e.g., made expectations clearer, improved the organization of the course, fostered learning, etc.) in the event they respond on the “lower” end of the scale (irrespective of the order of the item options provided)
7. The peer mentors supporting this course helped my transition to TAMU.
   1. Extremely helpful
   2. Helpful
   3. Moderately helpful
   4. Somewhat helpful
   5. Not at all helpful

8. This course contributed to my familiarity with campus resources designed to help me succeed as a student at TAMU.
   1. Not at all
   2. Somewhat
   3. Moderately
   4. Definitely

9. As a result of this course, I am aware of opportunities on campus for me to get involved.
   1. Not at all
   2. Somewhat
   3. Moderately
   4. Definitely

10. Through this course I developed skills that will help me achieve my personal and career goals.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Somewhat disagree
    4. Somewhat agree
    5. Agree
    6. Strongly agree

11. As a result of this course, I feel that I belong at TAMU.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Somewhat disagree
    4. Somewhat agree
    5. Agree
    6. Strongly agree

12. As a result of this course, I believe that I am very capable of succeeding at TAMU.
    1. Strongly disagree
    2. Disagree
    3. Somewhat disagree
    4. Somewhat agree
    5. Agree
    6. Strongly agree
Peer Mentor Evaluation of Instructor

Please assist us in evaluating the teaching experience of your instructor by responding to each of the questions listed.

Instructor’s Name: _________________________________________________________

Peer Mentor’s Name: _______________________________________________________

1. What were your instructor’s strengths as a teacher this semester?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

2. What constructive suggestions do you have for your instructor that could improve their teaching effectiveness in the future?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

3. How has your instructor facilitated student learning? Please be specific.
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

4. Please indicate whether you would recommend this instructor to teach Hullabaloo U in the future:
   o  Strongly Recommend
   o  Recommend
   o  Recommend with reservations
   o  Do not recommend

Please explain your answer.
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

5. Please share any additional comments/thoughts on your instructor’s performance this semester.
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
Instructor Evaluation of Peer Mentor

The support and mentorship instructors provide to peer mentors throughout the semester is critical for their development. Thank you!

In an effort to assess the effectiveness of the peer mentors and to determine your satisfaction with your teaching partnership, we request that all instructors submit a final evaluation of their peer mentor.

Please use the following scale to assess your peer mentor’s performance in your Hullabaloo U section. We recommend that you share this evaluation with your peer mentor as a means for feedback and ongoing development.

5 = Strongly Agree  4 = Agree  3 = Neutral  2 = Disagree  1 = Strongly Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>My peer mentor...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was an appropriate role model for our students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was an effective facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>made important contributions to our class</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was a valuable resource for our students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was helpful to students outside of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>was a valuable part of the Hullabaloo U experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consistently carried out responsibilities and fulfilled stated expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>made high-quality contributions to the class</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please provide comments explaining your ratings:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Please indicate whether you would recommend this student to serve as a peer mentor in the future:
☐ Strongly Recommend
☐ Recommend
☐ Recommend with reservations
☐ Do not recommend

Other comments:
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Instructor Signature __________________________      Date: ________________
Hullabaloo U Intervention & Response Process

Tier 3: Office for Student Success OR Tell Somebody Report
- Consistent, complex, or unresolved issues of concern beyond the expertise of the peer mentor and instructor
- Issue that might require a comprehensive response or unsure of appropriate referral
- Student indicates desire to withdraw or not return the following semester
- Excessive absences or poor performance (particularly in multiple courses)
- Concerning Behavior: Refer to Concerning Behavior Guide for more guidance

Tier 2: Instructor Follow-Up
- Consistent issues of concern, not resolved after peer mentor follow-up:
  - Student misses class more than one time
  - Conversation with peer mentor uncovers more complex issues
  - Any issue of concern that peer mentor feels uncomfortable approaching
  - More significant or repeated classroom disruptions

Tier 1: Peer Mentor Follow-Up
- Low-level/first-time issues of concern
- Student misses class one time
- Repeated tardiness
- Student not engaged in class
- Student says they are struggling in another class
- Minor classroom disruptions

Tier 3 Response: Office for Student Success or Tell Somebody?

Office for Student Success: Issues of primarily ACADEMIC concern
- Student wanting to withdraw and/or not planning to return or register for following semester
- Challenges accessing/navigating campus resources to assist with academic issues
- Academic complications
- Excessive absences
- Poor performance (particularly in multiple courses)
- Change of major questions not resolved by academic advisors
- Email studentsuccess@tamu.edu

Tell Somebody: Non-academic/behavioral/complex concerns
- Mental Health
- Threat of harm to self or others (non-emergency)
- Family Crisis
- Title IX Issues
- Concerns for which you are unsure of where to refer
- Concerning Behavior (see Concerning Behavior guide)
- Harrassment/Discrimination
- Submit form at tellsomebody.tamu.edu
STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

This guide serves as a resource for those who are interacting with students in distress and provides contact information if students need additional assistance. Contact the Dean of Faculties or Human Resources regarding concerning behavior on the part of faculty or staff, respectively.

Adapted from material provided by Counseling & Psychological Services

RECOGNIZE THE PROBLEM

- Tardiness or excessive absences
- Repetitive excuses
- Recurrence of addressed concerns
- Classroom disruptions
- Disclosure of sexual assault, harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking
- Sudden or extreme changes in behavior
- Threatening behavior
- Disclosure of suicidal/homicidal thoughts

WHAT TO DO

Talk to the student in private and allow plenty of time, and/or communicate care for the student’s well-being.

If you do not feel comfortable addressing all concerns, refer the student to Counseling & Psychological Services.

You can walk with the student to Counseling & Psychological Services, or:

Refer the student to the office location or online for an appointment at caps.tamu.edu.

Emergency walk-in accommodations are available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

If you have concerns about a student you have already tried to help, consult with Student Assistance Services or Counseling & Psychological Services.

CRISIS SITUATIONS

IF A STUDENT EXHIBITS BEHAVIOR THAT YOU FEEL INDICATES IMMEDIATE DANGER TO SELF OR SOMEONE ELSE, CALL 911.

For URGENT but NON-CRISIS situations during working hours, walk the student to Counseling & Psychological Services. After working hours, call the HelpLine at (979) 845-2700.

HELPFUL CONTACTS

AGGIE HONOR CODE
aggiehonor.tamu.edu | (979) 458-3378

CIVIL RIGHTS AND EQUITY INVESTIGATIONS
civ.tabs.tamu.edu | (979) 458-8407

COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
caps.tamu.edu | (979) 845-4427

HELPLINE | CRISIS HOTLINE
After hours or after 5 p.m.
caps.tamu.edu | (979) 845-2700

DEAN OF FACULTIES
dof.tamu.edu | (979) 845-4274

DISABILITY RESOURCES
disability.tamu.edu | (979) 845-1637

OFFICES OF THE DEAN OF STUDENT LIFE
studentlife.tamu.edu | (979) 845-3111

RESIDENCE LIFE
reslife.tamu.edu | (979) 862-3158

STUDENT ASSISTANCE SERVICES
sas.tamu.edu | (979) 845-3113

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
shs.tamu.edu | (979) 458-8316

STUDENT RULES
student-rules.tamu.edu | (979) 845-3111

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
upd.tamu.edu | (979) 845-2345

WORK/LIFE SOLUTIONS PROGRAM BY GUIDANCERESOURCES®
employees.tamu.edu/eap
THREATENING/CONCERNING BEHAVIOR

If you see or are dealing with threatening behavior or other unusual situations in which individuals appear extremely aggressive, contact:

UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
EMERGENCY
911
NON-EMERGENCY
(979) 845-2345 | upd.tamu.edu

TELL SOMEBODY/SPECIAL SITUATIONS TEAM (for non-emergency)
For behavior that is concerning and should be brought to the attention of the Special Situations Team, you may fill out a report at tellsomebody.tamu.edu.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR
Offices of the Dean of Student Life | (979) 845-3111

STAFF BEHAVIOR
Human Resources | (979) 845-3711

FACULTY BEHAVIOR
Dean of Faculties | (979) 845-4274
Phone assistance is only available during work hours.

STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

COUNSELING
If you are assisting a student who is experiencing a mental health crisis, or needs to speak to someone, contact:

COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday  
Phone: (979) 845-4427  
Helpline: (979) 845-2700 (after business hours) caps.tamu.edu

DISABILITY
If you are assisting a student with a disability who needs additional help, contact:

DISABILITY RESOURCES
8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday  
Phone: (979) 845-1637  
disability.tamu.edu

INJURY OR ILLNESS
For medical emergencies call 911 from a campus phone, or 911 from an off-campus phone or a cell phone. If a student is feeling ill, advise student to set up an appointment online or by phone at:

STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES
Location: A.P. Beutel Health Center I 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Houston Street - Across from All Faiths Chapel  
Monday - Friday  
Appointments: (979) 458-8250  
Dial-a-Nurse: (979) 458-8379  
24-Hour Patient Portal: shs.tamu.edu/appointments

HARASSMENT & DISCRIMINATION INCLUDING SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Texas A&M University strives to maintain a work and educational environment free from discrimination, sexual harassment, and related retaliation in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

OBLIGATIONS OF FACULTY AND STAFF
When alleged or suspected discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation is experienced or observed by or made known to an employee, the employee is responsible for reporting all information (TAMU System Regulation 08.01.01, section 2.1).

Consequences for Failure to Report or False Reporting
If an employee is found to have knowingly failed to make a required report or makes a false report with intent to harm or deceive, the employee will be terminated and could be charged with a Class A or B misdemeanor and fined up to $4,000 (Texas Senate Bill 212). Employees should not wait to report conduct until it becomes severe, pervasive, or persistent harassment. University officials will take appropriate steps to end the harassing behavior, prevent its recurrence, and/or remedy the effects.

WHERE ON CAMPUS TO DIRECT COMPLAINTS
The Department of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations is charged with the investigation and resolution of alleged violations of Texas A&M University’s civil rights policies, including Title IX.

JENNIFER SMITH, JD
Title IX Officer
civilrights@tamu.edu | 979.458.8407
Medical Sciences Library, Suite 007
titleIX.tamu.edu

REPORTING ONLINE & ANONYMOUS REPORTING
To report concerning behavior, including harassment and discrimination, you may fill out a form at tellsomebody.tamu.edu. The Department of Civil Rights and Equity Investigations reviews reports to determine appropriate action. You may share your contact information or submit the report anonymously. Depending on the amount of information disclosed, the university’s ability to investigate and respond to the report may be limited. NOTE: Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for reports submitted through this site. State law determines confidentiality.

REPORTING INCIDENTS OF HATE/BIAS
Individuals may use the online report form found at stophate.tamu.edu to report hate/bias incidents. A professional team reviews reports to determine necessary action. You may share your contact information or submit the report anonymously. Depending on the amount of information disclosed, the university’s ability to respond to the report may be limited. NOTE: Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for reports submitted through this site. State law determines confidentiality.
How should I respond when classroom disruption occurs and/or a student exhibits persistent disruption?

A number of factors influence the response to disruptive behavior. The Student Rules outline some guidelines for faculty to use as appropriate. These guidelines do not constitute a fixed procedure; they should be pursued according to your assessment of the situation.

Student Rule 21.2.1 states, “The instructor responsible for the class or activity where the alleged disruptive behavior occurred will inform the student that his/her behavior has been inappropriate. The instructor will describe to the student specific needed changes in the student’s behavior. The student will be provided an opportunity to modify his/ her behavior in accordance with the changes identified. The instructor will provide the student with a written, dated summary of his/her discussion with the student, and the instructor will retain a file copy of this summary.” Involve others as appropriate.

Even when there is no threat to harm, it may be helpful to report this behavior to your department chair or supervisor. It is important to report concerning behavior for continued monitoring of the student not only in your classroom but throughout campus.

Behavior of concern may also be reported at tellsomebody.tamu.edu.

I haven’t seen the student in a few weeks. What can I do?

Student Rule 7.7 states, “Whenever a student is absent for unknown reasons for an extended period of time, the instructor may initiate a check on the welfare of the student by reporting through the head of the student’s major department to the dean of the student’s college.”

Faculty or staff can contact Student Assistance Services at (979) 845-3113 to assist in conducting a welfare check on a student.

How should I report a concern that came from a private conversation with a student?

If the concern involves threat of harm to self or others, contact UPD if it is an emergency or, in non-crisis situations, report it to the Special Situations Team through the tellsomebody.tamu.edu website.

Please remember, when alleged or suspected discrimination, sexual harassment (including sexual violence), or retaliation is experienced or observed by or made known to an employee, the employee is responsible for reporting that information to the official university contact. Even when there is no threat of harm, it is suggested you involve others when a conversation or interaction with a student causes concern. You may find it helpful to discuss this with your department head or supervisor.

See previous page for information on where to get assistance.

Can I submit an anonymous report regarding concerning behavior?

You have the option to submit an anonymous report online (tellsomebody.tamu.edu) or via telephone. However, this type of reporting may limit or prolong the process of finding a solution or helping the individual. The Special Situations Team cannot guarantee a report will remain confidential. State law determines confidentiality.

Will someone notify me of the outcome regarding my report/referral?

Depending on the nature of the report/referral, Student Assistance Services or a staff member from the Offices of the Dean of Student Life may contact you to verify report details or to discuss the incident.

I believe that the student’s behavior might be a violation of our student rules. What can I do?

Submit a Campus Community Incident Report (CCIR) through the Student Conduct Office. More information can be obtained at studentlife.tamu.edu/sco.

A student came to me requesting assistance with the fact that her baby’s due date is midway through the semester. How do I accommodate her?

The Dear Colleague letter from the Office of Civil Rights (June 25, 2013) states, “It is illegal under Title IX for schools to exclude pregnant students from participating in any part of an educational program, including extracurricular activities…When a student returns to school, she must be allowed to return to the same academic and extracurricular status as before her medical leave began.”

Seek consultation from your department chair or supervisor. The Title IX coordinator is also available for consultation at (979) 458-8407.

This publication is a collaboration between the Texas A&M University Special Situations Team and the Division of Student Affairs.

UPDATED 09/2019

REPORT WITH ONE CLICK
You can also submit reports through the TAMU Mobile App. Click on the “Report a Concern” icon.
### Student Referral Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Behavior/Concern</th>
<th>CAPS</th>
<th>Helpline (after hours)</th>
<th>UPD</th>
<th>Tell Somebody</th>
<th>Stop Hazing</th>
<th>Dean of Student Life</th>
<th>Student Health Services</th>
<th>Student Success</th>
<th>Aggie Honor System Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological or emotional crisis, depressed or anxious</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicidal (ideations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suicidal (immediate threat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threatening behavior</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (non-emergency)</td>
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<td>Acting erratically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Domestic/Dating Violence, Stalking</td>
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<td>Suspect hazing</td>
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<td>Injury or Illness</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing Class</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>Negative changes in academic performance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking of withdrawing from Texas A&amp;M</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Dishonesty</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COUNSELING & PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)**
caps.tamu.edu | (979) 845-4427

**HELPLINE (AFTER HOURS CRISIS HOTLINE)**
After hours or after 5 p.m.
caps.tamu.edu | (979) 845-2700

**UNIVERSITY POLICE DEPARTMENT**
upd.tamu.edu | (979) 845-2345

**TELL SOMEBODY/SPECIAL SITUATIONS TEAM**
tellsomebody.tamu.edu

**STOP HAZING**
stophazing.tamu.edu

**OFFICES OF THE DEAN OF STUDENT LIFE**
studentlife.tamu.edu | (979) 845-3111

**STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES**
shs.tamu.edu | (979) 458-831

**OFFICE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**
studentsuccess.tamu.edu | 458-6111

**AGGIE HONOR SYSTEM OFFICE**
aggiehonor.tamu.edu | (979) 458-3378
Handling Difficult Students

Here are some ideas of what to do when you have students who...

1. **Resist the class**
   a. Sell the course – At the beginning of the class, sell the students on the benefits they will receive from taking Hullabaloo U. Talk about how you think it is valuable, what Texas A&M’s philosophy is for first-year student engagement, and what they can gain, both personally and academically.
   b. Point to transferability of skills and techniques – Many of the skills and techniques students learn in this class will help them build successful academic careers, form happy relationships, and improve the quality of their lives regardless of their choices.
   c. Distinguish between “liking” and “benefiting” – We don’t always like that which is beneficial to us. Most students find something about the class they don’t like. At the same time, it is almost certain that there will be beneficial suggestions. Even if students find only a few ideas that work for them, their performance can improve significantly.
   d. Collect and read anonymous evaluations – Throughout the semester, ask students to answer several questions about their reactions to the seminar such as “What is effective and what is ineffective in this class?” and “What would make this seminar more worthwhile for you?” Also ask which methods and strategies students have found helpful and which have not worked. Read and share both positive and negative comments and try to incorporate suggestions into the rest of the class meetings.

2. **Say they don’t need this course**
   a. Agree with them – Acknowledge that students probably already know a great deal about being successful. Also acknowledge that there is always room for improvement. Ask students to consider the possibility that learning and adopting a few truly effective strategies can save them time, improve their performance, and make a significant difference in the quality of their Aggie experience.
   b. Celebrate small achievements – Very few of us even have an opportunity to improve 100 percent. Suggest that improving 1 percent in a hundred different ways can accomplish an equally impressive result.

3. **Are struggling academically**
   a. Hold a conference – Set aside a time for a face-to-face talk about your expectations and the student’s expectations for the class. There may be confusion about what is required. Often, homework is neglected due to other difficulties in a student’s life. A committed listener is sometimes all that is needed. If more help is appropriate, refer students to other resources.
b. Refer them to the Academic Success Center for academic assistance at http://asc.tamu.edu

4. **Seem to dislike you**
   a. Don’t jump to conclusions – Sometimes students who seem the most unresponsive are actually creating an incredible amount of value for themselves.
   b. Don’t give up – Some students have a cool or tough act that takes a while to break through.
   c. Don’t take it personally – Of the over seven billion people in the world, some won’t like you, no matter what you do.
   d. Remember your purpose – Your job is to promote student success, not to win a popularity contest. Holding students accountable for self-responsibility is not always a popular role. Sometimes, you must choose between being liked and doing your part.

5. **Who do not participate**
   a. Review advantages of full participation – Discuss what students will gain, what obstacles to their success they might overcome, and how each exercise or discussion relates to the purpose of the course. Ask them to explore how much more they learn when they risk feeling foolish.
   b. Be structured – Give highly structured directions that lead students through exercises step-by-step. Sometimes, having to discuss with others and even having to choose a partner is scary.
   c. Demonstrate – Use volunteers, yourself or peer mentor to model what is expected of participants. Demonstrate the whole exercise if necessary to clarify what is expected and to help students feel more comfortable with it.
   d. Give them the choice – Students who choose not to participate have as much to learn about themselves as those who do take part. You can still ask students who do not participate to write reflecting statements about what they learned by not participating.

6. **Who do not attend class**
   a. Be sure that your records include telephone number and email address for each student. Reaching out to students works best if it is done in a completely non-threatening way. Avoid making judgments and inquire as to what is going on that is causing them to miss class. Come from a place of care.
   b. Invite them to contact you and/or stop by your office. An interested instructor is often all that is needed to get students back on track.
   c. Refer students to the Academic Success Center.

Adapted and reprinted with permission from: University 100 Peer Instructor Manual, Radford University, 1999.
Handling Disruptive Behaviors

What is disruptive behavior?
Essentially, determining what constitutes disruptive activity lies at the discretion of each instructor. According to University policies, “disruptive activity” is behavior in a classroom or instructional program that interferes with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of others to profit from it (See sections 21 and 24.4.15 of the Texas A&M Student Conduct Code).

Why are faculty members hesitant to report disruptive behavior?
Research suggests that instructors do not report disruptions because they hope for a spontaneous resolution, they fear they will not be supported by the administration, they fear it will reflect poorly on their abilities, and/or they fear retaliation. Since there has been an increase in the reporting of problems, and in many cases, in the severity of the problems, we would like to remind all faculty and instructors that the academic and student affairs staff is committed to ensuring that your decision will be met with support and expeditious resolution.

How do I handle disruptive activity?
Include on your syllabus:

- Guidelines and consequences regarding behaviors, attendance and punctuality
- Repercussions for academic dishonesty

On the first day of class:
- Clearly state behavioral expectations and consequences
- Discuss protocols for discussions/debates, including how to be recognized
- State (or negotiate) what you will allow or not allow in class (gum, hats, snacks, etc.)
- Role model expected behaviors

Other alternatives:
- Discuss student rights and responsibilities with more experienced colleagues or with the Student Conduct Office.

When it occurs:
- Remain calm and in control
- Identify and acknowledge the behavior in class or immediately after
- Offer a solution or recommend a continuation of the discussion after class or during office hours
- Document the incident
- Follow-up with the student verbally and in writing
If the situation escalates:
- Dismiss the student from class or dismiss the class entirely
- Document the incident with Director of the First Year Experience within the Office for Student Success (interdisciplinary sections) or with your department head (disciplinary based sections) and the Student Conduct Office.
- Notify the proper authorities (including the TAMU University Police Department) or the Special Situations Team (tellsomebody.tamu.edu).

Remember to never:
Raise your voice, argue with the student, threaten the student, get too close to the student, touch the student, use abusive language toward the student, or put yourself in danger!