



Promote a sense of belonging for all students by creating a welcoming learning environment.

Foster a welcoming and inclusive environment where students are challenged, supported, treated fairly, and valued for their contributions.

Inclusive teaching is built upon conversations with and among students that honor each student's individual identities. However, in order to foster these discussions, instructors first need to create an environment where students' differences are openly acknowledged and accepted. Crafting an authentic, thoughtful statement on diversity, offering materials in different modalities, and inviting students to participate in conversations surrounding classroom policies are just a few ways that instructors can contribute to such an environment.

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Beyond policies and procedures, an instructor's intentionality behind creating a welcoming learning environment where students feel their differences are valued and accepted is crucial.ⁱ Instructors can demonstrate this intentionality in the way they speak with students—e.g., by treating their experiences as valid contributions—and in the behaviors that they model toward their students. Creating a welcoming learning environment makes all students feel supported, which leads to increased motivation and improved academic performance.ⁱⁱ

Faculty Development Resources

[A head Start in Higher Education: The Effect of a Transition Intervention on Interaction, Sense of belonging, and Academic performance.](#)

Given the challenging transition from secondary school into higher education, this quasi-experimental study measured the effects of a pre-academic programme (i.e., before starting at university) on student–faculty interactions, student–peer interactions, sense of belonging, and first-year academic performance. Fifty-eight first-year students participated in a pre-academic programme (i.e., the experimental group) focused on changing their perceptions of effective learning behaviour to enhance high-quality interaction with peers and faculty, their sense of belonging, and academic performance.

[Developing a Positive Classroom Climate](#)

Classroom climate is a broad construct, made up of students' feelings about their instructor and peers. Although there is a plethora of research on the effects of classroom climate on student outcomes at the secondary level, there is a relative dearth of such research on the postsecondary level. However, much of the research that does exist shows that students' perceptions of classroom climate at the postsecondary level have a great impact on learning, motivation, satisfaction, and achievement. This paper will thus provide strategies to help instructors promote positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom, which increases student connectedness, thereby improving classroom climate. Instructors should always consider how their behaviors may be interpreted by their students and keep the classroom climate in mind when developing courses and lesson plans. Doing so is likely to increase positive outcomes for students as well as levels of satisfaction for the instructor.

[Fostering Success and Belonging for First-Generation Students](#)

Click on this link to sign up for a webinar sponsored by ACUE.



[Video: Prof Lisa Nunn on Fostering Academic Belonging](#) Here, Lisa Nunn, a guest speaker at Bentley University discusses how to Foster Academic Belonging.

In class activities

<p><u>The Spectrum Activity, Questions of Identity</u></p> <p>The Spectrum Activity, Questions of Identity are questions for discussion or reflective writing that prompt students to critically consider their identities and the relationship between identity and context. This activity requires students to move around the classroom and ensuring that all students have access to do so is imperative. Be sure to address any accommodations before implementing this activity.</p>	<p><u>Group Process Activity</u></p> <p>This collection of activities provides a selection of vetted exercises that will assist instructors and students in developing group cohesion, thoughtful engagement, and reflective responses to challenging material.</p> <p>The activities are divided into four types: Icebreakers, Group Maintenance, Dialogue Starters, and Reflection.</p>
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Further resources that can be used in the classroom

[Culturally Responsive Icebreakers – Bentley Learning Design Blog](#)

Culturally responsive icebreakers serve as a valuable instrument to foster a positive tone and establish an environment for learning. Many faculty at Bentley have been using icebreakers in their courses for some time, and we recommend that you connect and discuss those that have worked well.

[Norms and expectations resources](#)

Here you will find a list of resources on norms and expectations in various disciplines and contexts.

[Getting Started](#), University of Chicago

Click on this link to take a deeper dive into strategies for your classroom.

Video



[Inalienable Rights: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Belonging](#): Terrell Strayhorn, Tenured Professor in the Evelyn Reid Syphax School of Education, Department of Psychology; Director of the Center for the Study of HBCUs at Virginia Union University.

Further readings

Al-Hija, & Araidy, R. Z. (2023). Correlations Between Achievements in Mathematics, Student Characteristics, Classroom Climate and Self-Efficacy. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 23(8), 252–264. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jhetp.v23i8.6079>

S, Parkes [“Fostering a sense of belonging: Supporting the early formation of student identity as successful learners in higher education”](#), *Journal of Learning Development in Higher Education*, Issue 7: June 2014 2

Want to talk through these resources? Please contact [Georgia Madway](#), Instructional Designer of Inclusive Pedagogy.

ⁱ Addy, T. M., Dube, D., Mitchell, K. A., & SoRelle, M. (2023). *What inclusive instructors do: Principles and practices for excellence in college teaching*. Taylor & Francis.

ⁱⁱ Koshino, K. (2016) *Campus racial climate and experiences of students of color in a midwestern college. Learning Environment: The global relevance of critical and inclusive pedagogies in higher education*. Stylus Publishing: Sterling, Virginia. Tuitt, F., Haynes, & Stewart, S. (eds).