DO I BELONG?
WHAT INSTRUCTORS CAN DO
TO FOSTER STUDENTS’ SENSE
OF BELONGING

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Do I Belong?

What instructors can do to foster students' sense of belonging
It's simple, but sometimes radical, to use students' names.
Video Nametags
Do You Think All Your Students Belong? How do you know?

Campus Climate Survey Highlights & What Other Research Tells Us

3 x 2 Ideas for Fostering Belonging Throughout the Semester

Table Ideas Generation

3 Steps to Action
Do you think all students feel like they belong in your classroom?

How do you know?
**Sense of Belonging by Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>To no extent</th>
<th>To some extent</th>
<th>To a great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UMass Climate Survey

**WHAT DO OUR STUDENTS SAY?**
DO OUR STUDENTS ALL FEEL THE SAME SENSE OF BELONGING?

Who feels like they belong to at least some extent? (GE 90%)

- No disability, sensory or learning disability
- Man and Woman
- Asian, White, & International
- Heterosexual
- Non-First Generation
- Non - Transfer

Who feels like they do not belong? (GE 15%)

- Black, Latinx & Multiracial
- Mobility-related, Mental Health or more than one Disability
- Trans Woman or Man and Gender Questioning
- Transfer
WHAT THE RESEARCH TELLS US:
UMASS CLIMATE SURVEY

Evaluation of Overall Experience by Sense of Belonging

- To a great extent: 50% (Undergraduate students), 46% (all students)
- To some extent: 30% (Undergraduate students), 60% (all students), 7% (other population)
- To no extent: 32% (Undergraduate students), 54% (all students), 13% (other population)

Of all the Undergraduate students who reported feeling like they belong at UMass Amherst, "To no extent," 1% evaluated their overall experience at UMass Amherst as "Excellent".
SENSE OF BELONGING

Respected  Connected  Included
Heard  Validated  Supported

Fully human
WHY DOES A SENSE OF BELONGING MATTER?

• Motivation
• Attention
• Effort
• Coping Skills
• Persistence
• Completion

GET READY FOR OUR JAMBOARD

tinyurl.com/Jamboard-Belonging

Blue Tables - Use Jamboard 1
Green Tables - Use Jamboard 2
Orange Tables - Use Jamboard 3
Online - Use Jamboard 4

Click on the Sticky note or Text Box icon to add to the Jamboard!
WHAT DO YOU THINK...?

...MAKES YOUR CLASSROOMS A LEARNING SPACE WHERE STUDENTS FEEL THEY BELONG?
PARTICIPANT JAMBOARD RESPONSES: WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES YOUR CLASSROOMS LEARNING SPACES WHERE STUDENTS FEEL THEY BELONG? HOW DO YOU KNOW?

- Create a welcome survey before classes started: share personal details, name- pronunciation or other name, any questions
- Share a survey at the beginning of classes giving space for students to share their needs
- Student create PowerPoints where they introduce themselves, why they came to UMass, and then comment on each others.’
- A lot of ice breakers to get people talking about what’s going on with them, get their voices used to being in the room.
- Haring pictures of students as young children at the beginning of each class and we guess who it is.
- Play a game .
- Games and having a chance to voice their pronouns
- Asking students to share pronouns "if comfortable", role model by sharing pronouns.
- Introduce self on first day and answer a question to get used to talking in class
- large class: inclusive syllabus, include story about self and your own background and trajectory
- Where are you from- Instructor goes first
- From student’s perspective: Acknowledging our background, Professor interest to hear us.
- Sharing your own personal experiences.
- Introduce self
- Instructors who might normally code-switch for class can speak how they speak in settings where they feel more comfortable.
- Generate guidelines for interacting with each other.
- In a small discussion class, having community guidelines, giving everyone a chance to introduce themselves, make it clear we want to hear from everyone.
- Establish classroom norms and allow students to provide input for classroom policies.
- Class agreements about respectful interactions
- Modeling how you speak to individuals - model good behavior
- Modeling how to have conversations (that could be challenging/difficult, etc.)
- Using I statements
- Listening to student input and always being open.
• Decolonized language and information.
• Sharing research by women, Black scholars, indigenous scholars, disabled scholars, and other scholars who represent the students in your class.
• Use materials by diverse authors.
• Drawing attention to non-white-male sources.
• Seeing representation of themselves in the class' subject.
• Add physical symbols of inclusivity and acceptance of identities.
• Include readings that "look like" my students.
• Acknowledging discomfort with some topic while explaining them
• Run an interactive classroom, promoting dialog and validating responses.
• Large class: ask for unexpected examples of something to set expectation that different is good
• I have a lot of undergrad TAs for my larger lectures and try to make sure that they are as diverse and representative as possible.
• I explicitly talk about the university commitment to equity and inclusion. I talk openly about myself and encourage them to do the same and talk to people around them.
• I do a belonging reflection during the first weeks of the semester where first year students read (and then write about) reflections written by junior / senior biology majors about how it felt when they were in the first large lecture class.
• Having one-on-one conversations at the beginning of the semester with students that need accommodations to ensure that you meet their needs
• I show enthusiasm and love for the students' research interests!
• Pay attention to personal goals.
• Ask students what their values and goals are.
• Students’ experiences are welcome in the classroom.
Provide need based support to students and make sure that their voices are heard by creating flexible learning environment.

Individual desk meetings.

Encourage questions. "I’d rather you come to me with your questions than be struggling alone."

Checking in with students, and asking how they're "really" doing; acknowledging current events that may impact student’s experience/their ability to focus

Suggesting open access technology, encouraging transparency when talking about class work.

Making sure materials are designed to be accessible

Turn on automatic closed captions please.

Captions should be included whenever needed

Normalize confusion, not knowing, failure - emphasize the learning process/journey.

Validation by paraphrasing/restating what they've said and providing positive feedback. Active listening with affirmation.

Sooner you get them talking the better.

Providing opportunities to present knowledge in different ways (various forms of assessment).

Including different modalities of course content (text, video, in-person)

Provide students with many ways to engage - small groups, online, I'm writing, etc.

Give students choices in assignments

Studio context. students working together in a group, collaborative format.
FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER

01 Empower Students as Knowledge Makers

02 Create Meaningful Peer-to-Peer Interactions

03 Convey Your Investment in Your Students' Learning
How do you provide opportunities for students to make positive contributions to your course through their unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives?

The Power of Choice

Consensus Building Exercise

Takacs-How Does Your Positionality Bias Your Epistemology?
STUDENTS AS KNOWLEDGE MAKERS
- PARTICIPANT JAMBOARD IDEAS

• Vevox: Free polling app students can use, ask students to share questions, can integrate into power point
• allow student choice on topic for a paper
• LOTS of choice in what the central topic of the assignment. Can’t be all things to all people.
• Small group makes a movie about class subject/assignments outside class.
• Wikipedia page assignment to find someone from an underrepresented group and create a page.
• Choose resources that they use to learn the content (give several choices).
• For math: Find applications of the material that are relevant to the students' lives. Ask the students to think about how the math has shown up in their lives.
• Modeling how to give and take criticism.
• Emphasizing that we should be learning from each other.
• Team based learning + peer to peer work. Turning to each other for help and incorporating peer feedback.
• Follow-up surveys to try and get multiple points of feedback and include those who are reluctant to speak up in class.
How do you encourage your students to build connections with their peers socially and academically throughout the semester?

- **Wisdom of another**
  Pose a question. Think – Pair – Share (or small group). Volunteers share a classmate’s idea.

- **Explain your thinking**
  Conduct a poll (iClicker). Share class responses. Repeat the polling question. Pose the question: What made you change your mind?
CREATE MEANINGFUL PEER-TO-PEER INTERACTIONS - PARTICIPANT IDEAS

- Shaping a discussion around identity (jigsaw).
- Pairing students up to build accountability partners.
- Providing space at the end of class to exchange contact information in case students miss class.
- Providing first five minutes for peers to pair up and check in about life/mental health/exciting life updates.
- Fast Friends Protocol to assist in creating belonging.
- Making breakouts room and five minutes ice breaking activities in between the class like Zumba dance, meditation. Recurring group work and setting up roles. Adding community activity lot shared notes.
- Resolve work issues together.
- Classroom-facilitated study groups.
- Mentor TAs of the same background as the students. Act as guides to living in the area outside the classroom.
- Small group-Group grade, but individual quiz. This gets people invested in the group.
- Small group projects. small peer reviews..
- Encourage students to look and learn from other students work.
- Team-based learning in a flipped classroom. The groups do the readings outside the classroom, then professor makes in-class exercises for them to work on. Professor-assigned groups to be heterogeneous for background.
- Semester-long group projects with periodic, anonymous group check-ins that ask about distribution of labor among group members. Team-based learning ‘lite’: time in-class for them to connect and do some of the work. Think, Pair, Share when discussing difficult topics.
- Exercises assigned to on-the-spot groups after very brief instruction, then report back to the class.
- Work in pairs or small groups.
- Small group activities.
- Debate/discussion activity.
- Show slides in all buildings on tvs that show what others are doing across campus.
- Smaller, one-on one interactions between students and this office. Actively bring the student workers into the team, ask them about their lives regularly, facilitate ownership of the work of the office.
How do you do let students know that you care for them, believe in them and their growth?

Targeted Group Emails

Muddiest Point – Minute Paper – 3-2-1

See Classroom Assessment Techniques
CONVEYING YOUR INVESTMENT IN YOUR STUDENTS’ LEARNING - PARTICIPANT IDEAS

• Send targeted emails to students after a quiz/exam.
• Taking time to give feedback that helps students learn and grow (not just about grades).
• Even if you can't incorporate student feedback right away this semester, can let them know how you will implement in the future.
• Minute papers - have TAs help review; key points; questions - address the next class or have students answer each other's questions; muddiest point alone could be daunting if only focused on what not understanding.
• Welcome survey at start of semester to solicit feedback and show investment in student goals - save one lecture at end semester for student choice.
• Open discussion about how we evaluate their learning - explore practices like un-grading.
• Providing a rationale for a policy or an activity.

• Goal = student success.
• Show multiple pathways toward success.
• Be a coach.
• Small class - submit reflections before coming to class, read before class and then highlight points during the class itself - students appreciate hearing their thoughts reflected.
• Do not ask- where are you from?
• Office hours, availability.
• Learn their names.
• Listen to their stories.
• Opportunity to engage with each other, small group activities, group projects.
CHECK OUT OUR FACULTY SUCCESS STORIES

- Interactive Peer Instruction in a Large Lecture STEM Course
- Fostering Student Interest, Creativity, and Joy Through Multimedia Projects
- Using Reading Guides to Help Students Engage with Course Materials
- Using Contemplative Practices to Deepen Student's Emotional and Intellectual Engagement
- Using Exit Tickets to Check in with Students and Foster Learning
- Outreach to Students: Connecting and Caring for Student Success
- Building a Culture of Academic Integrity
- Caption This! Best Practices for Live Captioning Presentations
- Welcome Videos to Build Community
- Keeping Students Motivated and Engaged in Large Online Classes
- A Better Way to Do Peer Review of Writing in Large Classes
- Designing a Class with a Variety of Ways to Participate and Succeed
- Making Videos That Students Want to Watch
- Reducing Student Textbook Costs and Making a Curriculum More Inclusive at the Same Time
- Wrapping Up the Semester Strong
- Making the Most of Synchronous and Asynchronous Class Activities to Enhance Student Learning
- Creating Open Education Resources that Save Students Money and Build Teacher Collaboration
- Helping Students Engage Meaningfully with the SRTI Process
CHECK OUT OUR HOW DO I PAGES

• Start Each Class Session?
• Increase Student Engagement with Participation Agreements?
• Support Students with Compassion and Empathy?
• Provide Flexibility and Ensure Attendance?
• Support International Students in My Classes?
• Use Note Catchers to Support Group Work and Collaborative Note Taking?
• Keep My Students Engaged in Large Courses?
• Best Engage Students During Synchronous Class Sessions?
• Write an Inclusive Syllabus?
Empower Students as Knowledge Makers

Create Meaningful Peer-to-Peer Interactions

Convey Your Investment in Your Students Learning
GENERATE YOUR OWN IDEAS

Brainstorm at your tables.
Each table contribute their ideas to our Google Jamboard.

- **Blue Tables** - Use Jamboards 5 - 8
- **Green Tables** - Use Jamboards 9 - 12
- **Orange Tables** - Use Jamboards 13 - 16
- **Online** - Join any Jamboard

[tinyurl.com/Jamboard-Belonging](https://tinyurl.com/Jamboard-Belonging)
Fostering a Sense of Belonging Throughout the Semester

01
Empower Students as Knowledge Makers
• How do you provide opportunities for students to make positive contributions to your course through their unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives?

02
Create Meaningful Peer-to-Peer Interactions
• What course structures and learning activities will allow your students to build connections with their peers socially and academically throughout the semester?

03
Convey Your Investment in Your Students' Learning
• What will you do to let students know that you care for them, believe in them and their growth?
1. Today I will...
2. Next week I will...
3. By the end of the semester I will...

Think & Write: How will you foster students' sense of belonging today, next week, by the end of the semester? (2 minutes).

Turn to someone next to you, share your responses, ask for feedback. (5 minutes)
Reverse your roles. (5 minutes)