

CTEL Course Resource Guide

Fostering a Sense of Belonging

Key Concepts & Highlights

A sense of belonging begins on the first day of class. Professor Eileen Santiago emphasizes reducing confusion through clear expectations, requirements, and due dates so students understand that the instructor is part of their team. She also recommends structured small-group time, a mix of mini lectures and hands-on practice, and station rotations with small chunks of learning material to help students get to know one another, participate actively, and feel part of the class.

Recommended Strategies & Practices for Implementation

1. Strategy: Reduce Confusion from the First Day

Why it matters:

Clear expectations, requirements, and due dates help students understand what is expected and communicate that the instructor is supporting their success.

How to implement:

- Clarify course expectations and requirements at the beginning of the class.
- Make due dates clear and easy to locate.
- Communicate from day one that you are part of the students' team.

2. Strategy: Build Connection through Team Time

Why it matters:

Structured small-group work gives students opportunities to learn with classmates and become familiar with more members of the class.

How to implement:

- Set aside class time for students to work in small groups.
- Use team time early so students begin getting to know one another during the first weeks.
- Circulate among the groups to observe, answer questions, and support participation.

3. Strategy: Alternate Mini Lectures and Hands-On Activities

Why it matters:

Moving between brief instruction and practice keeps students involved and gives them opportunities to apply learning with classmates while the instructor checks their progress.

How to implement:

- Break class time into short periods of explanation followed by hands-on practice.
- Allow students to work with one another during the practice portions.
- Walk around the room to observe student work and see what is happening.

4. Strategy: Use Station Rotations

Why it matters:

Station rotations provide small chunks of learning material and allow students to move through different learning areas rather than listening to the instructor for the entire class.

How to implement:

- Divide learning material into small, focused chunks.
- Place activities or content in different stations or learning areas.
- Have students rotate through each area and engage with the material.
- Use the rotations to increase participation and help students feel part of the class.

Quick Tips

- Begin belonging-focused practices on the first day of class.
- Make expectations, requirements, and due dates clear.
- Use small-group team time early in the course.
- Balance mini lectures with hands-on practice.
- Use station rotations to present learning in small chunks and increase participation.

Additional Resources

[Professor Eileen Santiago - Sense of Belonging](#): Watch the CTET teaching tip on reducing confusion and using active classroom structures to foster belonging.

[CTET Faculty Resources](#): Explore additional teaching resources and professional development opportunities.