



5 Tips for Building Rapport with Your Students

Start the semester off on the right foot with your students, whether you teach online or in-person. This quick sheet will contain some strategies you can implement right away to begin building trust and respect with your students.

Tip 1: Create a Pact with your Students

You can write up a pact that sets the expectations from day one with two categories: What I Expect From You and What You Can Expect From Me. Michelle Pacansky-Brock [provides an excellent example](#) of items you might include in your pact (slide 20 at the link).

Tip 2: Start Using Their Names on Day One

Take paper and markers and have your students create name tents for the class so that you can start putting names to faces right away. If your course is all online, use their names in any correspondence you have with them.

Tip 3: Create a “Getting to Know You” Survey

Asking students to fill out a private questionnaire can provide you with key information and help build a sense of student belonging. Some questions you might include are things like their preferred name and pronouns, if they foresee any challenges or have any concerns about the course and their readiness, their goals for the course and for the future, and anything else that they think you should know – talents, interests, and skills outside of their career paths, for example.

Tip 4: Use AI to Create an Icebreaker Activity

Use the following prompt in AI to set up an icebreaker activity in the first week of classes, courtesy of Shannon Eastep:

“Create an icebreaker where students interact with AI to discover their ‘superpower.’ Students



will input a few details about their hobbies, favorite activities, or personality traits, and the AI will generate a unique superpower and superhero name for them. Students will then introduce themselves by sharing their superpower and name with the class.”

Tip 5: Schedule Small Group Meetings

Whether you are teaching online or in-person, small class sizes or large enrollments, you can set some time aside to touch base with your students, even if it’s only for 10 minutes. Give them a sign-up sheet or use a booking link, like Calendly, to set up open meeting slots. These more intimate conversations will be an opportunity to troubleshoot early on or provide a space for students to ask questions they might not be willing to in front of the entire class.

Contact CETI!

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