

The logo for the START handbook. It features a large, stylized letter 'S' composed of multiple overlapping, curved lines in red, blue, green, and yellow. To the right of the 'S', the word 'START' is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below 'START', the word 'handbook' is written in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font.

START handbook

How can I help
my first-year students
engage, persist
and succeed?



Co-funded by
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Decorative wavy lines in red, blue, green, and yellow that sweep across the bottom of the page.

Contents

Contents	8
Introduction	12
Have you considered that first-year students may not be able to assess their abilities.	14
Have you considered that students might feel afraid to ask for support?	17
Have you considered that students may not be aware of who to ask for support?	22
Have you considered how your teaching methods and forms could enable students.	26
Have you considered that students might be overwhelmed by the university environment.	31
Have you considered that students might struggle to speak in public?	36
Have you considered that what is expected from students might not be clear?	38
Have you considered that students may not know how to interact with a lecturer?	39
Have you considered that students may not be used to questioning their learning process.	42
Have you considered that different teaching approaches and strategies can be more.	45
Have you considered that different communication styles can make students feel.	49
Have you considered that students may not be aware of your expectations regarding.	52
Have you considered that students may not be aware of university support structures.	55
Have you considered that certain feedback methods are more effective depending.	58
Have you considered that students might need feedback at different moments to be.	62
Have you considered that first-year students might not be used to receiving feedback.	65
Have you considered that students might only see feedback as a way of pointing out.	67
Have you considered that even small experiments with different techniques can make.	70
Have you considered using 'humanization' strategies and techniques in order to help.	74
Have you considered that your first-year university students may have difficulty with.	79
Have you considered that first-year students may have a different understanding of.	82
Have you considered that this might be the first time first-year students have been.	86
Have you considered that the university structure might be bigger than first-year students.	89

Contents (continued)

Have you considered that students might not yet have had the opportunity to learn.	93
Have you considered that students might have forgotten the background knowledg.	95
Have you considered students may understand their classmates better than the teac.	97
Have you considered that there may be students that can go further?	99
Have you considered that students need more time to assimilate the material?	102
Have you considered asking them what instructional styles suit them best?	104
Have you considered that some students don't see the relevance or value of some a.	107
Have you considered that some students may not have developed effective study h.	110
Have you considered that out of class study conditions can impact students' ability.	112
List of recommended resources	141

START Handbook

START Handbook

*How can I help my first-year students engage, persist
and succeed?*

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Contents

Introduction	1
First year students don't ask for support	3
<i>Have you considered that first-year students may not be able to assess their abilities or when they need support?</i>	3
<i>Have you considered that students might feel afraid to ask for support?</i>	6
<i>Have you considered that students may not be aware of who to ask for support?</i>	11
First year students don't seem to ask questions	15
<i>Have you considered how your teaching methods and forms could enable students to ask questions?</i>	15
My students don't participate in class	20
<i>Have you considered that students might be overwhelmed by the university environment?</i>	20
<i>Have you considered that students might struggle to speak in public?</i>	25
My students don't reply/respond to my questions	27
<i>Have you considered that what is expected from students might not be clear?</i>	27
<i>Have you considered that students may not know how to interact with a lecturer?</i>	28
My students do not seem interested in going beyond/ deepening the knowledge they get during the class	31
<i>Have you considered that students may not be used to questioning their learning process?</i>	31

My students don't show up to class	34
<i>Have you considered that different teaching approaches and strategies can be more engaging to students?</i>	34
<i>Have you considered that different communication styles can make students feel more engaged or comfortable to attend classes?</i>	38
I don't know how to support best my students while maintaining balanced boundaries	41
<i>Have you considered that students may not be aware of your expectations regarding communications and boundaries?</i>	41
<i>Have you considered that students may not be aware of university support structures beyond their teachers?</i>	44
I do not have the time to personalise feedback for every activity my students do	47
<i>Have you considered that certain feedback methods are more effective depending on the learning goal?</i>	47
My students react instead of embracing the feedback I give to them	51
<i>Have you considered that students might need feedback at different moments to be reassured?</i>	51
<i>Have you considered that first-year students might not be used to receiving feedback?</i>	54
<i>Have you considered that students might only see feedback as a way of pointing out mistakes?</i>	56
It is not simple to vary my pedagogical approaches when teaching in large groups	59
<i>Have you considered that even small experiments with different techniques can make a big difference in large group instructional experiences?</i>	59

Establishing a close relationship with students in large classes is a complex task	63
<i>Have you considered using 'humanization' strategies and techniques in order to help build connections?</i>	63
My students don't seem to understand their place in the university system	68
<i>Have you considered that your first-year university students may have difficulty comprehending how the university differs from secondary school?</i>	68
<i>Have you considered that first-year students may have a different understanding of what the word 'study' means?</i>	71
My students seem to be swamped with university information	75
<i>Have you considered that this might be the first time first-year students have been added to institutional mailing lists?</i>	75
<i>Have you considered that the university structure might be bigger than first-year students are used to and that the amount of information the students have to deal with is larger?</i>	78
My students don't have the proper background knowledge to be successful in my class	82
<i>Have you considered that students might not yet have had the opportunity to learn this knowledge?</i>	82
<i>Have you considered that students might have forgotten the background knowledge?</i>	84
I don't know how to provide/give opportunities for motivated students	86
<i>Have you considered students may understand their classmates better than the teacher?</i>	86
<i>Have you considered that there may be students that can go further?</i>	88

My students have different needs and I don't have enough time to address them	91
<i>Have you considered that students need more time to assimilate the material?</i>	91
<i>Have you considered asking them what instructional styles suit them best?</i>	93
My students don't do the prescribed readings/homework or do it in a very poor/low quality manner	96
<i>Have you considered that some students don't see the relevance or value of some activities in terms of their future career?</i>	96
<i>Have you considered that some students may not have developed effective study habits and/or don't know how to manage their studying time?</i>	99
<i>Have you considered that out of class study conditions can impact students' ability to work effectively?</i>	101
Self-Assessment Tools	104
University Culture	107
Feedback	111
Balanced Personal Support	118
Help Students Ask for Support	120
Overcoming Public Speaking Anxiety	121
Engagement	123
Effective Study Habits	124
Differentiation	126
Who to Ask for Support	127
Teaching Methods to Facilitate Asking Questions	129
List of recommended resources	130

The **START Handbook** is one of the four results of the Erasmus+ [project START](#), which aims to support teachers who help students transition from high school to higher education. START gathers a group of university teachers, faculty developers and professionals of education from six partner institutions: University of Groningen (the Netherlands), University College Dublin (Ireland), Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain), Université de Poitiers (France), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) and the Education for an Interdependent World European youth NGO (Belgium).

The goal of the handbook you are reading is to provide those who teach first-year undergraduate students with strategies and resources to facilitate their students' transition to higher education. For that purpose, two complementing analyses were performed. On the one hand, a **literature review was conducted with 79 different sources** from 20 countries to identify the main challenges students face transitioning to higher education. The categorisation of these challenges constitutes the theoretical framework for all the START project further professional development resources. On the other hand, **65 first-year students, 89 academics teaching first-year undergraduates, and 27 faculty developers** were interviewed through focus groups in the five universities of the START consortium.

The primary data used for the handbook, come from the focus groups in which university teachers were asked to list the main challenges they experience when working with first-year undergraduate students. A thematic analysis showed 17 main difficulties which guide the structure of the handbook.

The handbook contributors looked into what has worked for them and other academics in relation to these difficulties and identified a wide range of resources and pedagogical strategies that could be of help for teachers who also experience some of the 17 challenges. Three types of content are proposed: in-depth content, easy-to-use resources and global pedagogical strategy.

How to use this handbook

You can consult the handbook¹ by chapter if you have identified a teaching problem. Like any other book, you can go to the table of contents (top left) and navigate to the different chapters of the book. At any time, you can click

on the name of the book (top center) to return to the home screen. If you wish to see a full-screen table of contents, please visit [this page](#).

If you look for teaching resources, you can go directly to the end of the handbook where a list of recommended resources is presented.

Every chapter has the same three sections: (1) overarching strategies, (2) quick wins and (3) the further information box. As mentioned before, the chapter title represents one of the identified first-year teaching challenges. It is followed by one or more propositions of pedagogical solutions formulated as questions.

The overarching strategies (1) propose the reader some big categories of strategies that have been adapted to tackle the teaching challenges from the transition perspective.

The right column of each chapter presents quick wins (2) that can be ideas or resources in an easy and quick-to-implement format.

At the end of the chapter, a blue box presents further information (3) such as an annotated bibliography, scientific references or recommended resources.

To assess your competencies to teach first-year students, you can use the [Self-Assessment Tools](#) that the START team has created.

For more information about the project, [contact us here](#).

1 The navigation experience of the handbook is better suited for Chrome and Safari.

Have you considered that first-year students may not be able to assess their abilities or when they need support?



→ **QW 1. Self-Assessment Questionnaire.** This [questionnaire](#) is used to address students' challenges with Academic Engagement.

→ **QW 2. Use Interactive Notice Boards.** Digital tools like the interactive notice boards (Padlet, Miro, etc.) can enable the instructor to create a virtual boards for students to post comments on each others' work.

The [research](#) has found that students struggle with personal challenges, such as adapting to new demands, and with academic engagement challenges such as seeking and asking for academic support, adapting to a greater workload, module requirements and with developing learning strategies, both cognitive processing and metacognitive regulation.

Use Self-Assessment Tools with Feedback

Getting ready for exams in higher education can present difficulties, and

students frequently require assistance in evaluating their abilities and proficiencies. Educators and instructors suggest integrating self-assessment tools into their teaching methods to enhance students' exam results and promote awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement (Sharma et al., 2016; Mohammed and Ahmed, 2023; Dungan, 2006; Papanthymou and Darra, 2018). These tools can be :

- Quizzes,
- E-portfolios,
- Web-based Assessments,
- Rubrics for self and peer assessment,
- Questionnaires (*See Quick Win 1*)

Using these kind of self-assessment tools for students serve multiple purposes, including increasing the interest and motivation level of students for the subjects. This leads to enhanced learning, improved exam preparation, better academic performance, assessment of their knowledge and teaching them lifelong learning skills. It also enables the students to be more engaged in their learning whilst developing self-evaluation skills for lifelong learning and professional practice (Sharma et al., 2016; Mohammed and Ahmed, 2023 and Dungan, 2006).

Use Peer Feedback Tools

Research has shown that peer feedback can be a valuable tool in the classroom, with students reporting positive experiences and improved work (Almubarak, 2021). In classes where writing is the main focus, peer feedback on research papers has been found to be as valuable as teacher feedback (Kennette, 2013). However, it's important to ensure that peer feedback is of high quality, focusing on neutral, informative, and thorough responses (Nilsson, 2003).

- **Create opportunities for peer feedback** and encourage students to provide constructive criticism. When students review each other's work, they gain insights into their own performance. Peer feedback in the classroom can be facilitated by various digital tools that make the process more efficient and engaging. When selecting digital tools for peer feedback, consider the specific needs and preferences of your stu-

dents. It's also important to provide clear guidelines and training to students on how to use these tools effectively for peer feedback. *See Quick Win 2*

Further Information and References

- See detail page on [self-assessment tools](#) for more information and references on this topic.
- Focusing on feedback, this [article](#) explores how students both receive and provide feedback during in-class activities.
→ Almubarak, S.H. (2020). Engaging in feedback: Students as recipients and providers of feedback in an in-class activity. *Journal of Practice Teaching & Learning*, 18;(1)2, 60.
- Investigating the value of peer feedback, this [article](#) specifically addresses writing-intensive classes.
→ Kennette, L.N., & Frank, N.M. (2013). The Value of Peer Feedback Opportunities for Students in Writing Intensive Classes. *Psychology Teaching Review*, 19(2), 106-111.
- Nilson, L.B. (2003). Improving Student Peer Feedback. *College Teaching*, 51(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567550309596408>

Have you considered that students might feel afraid to ask for support?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW 1. Question Time Box.** Quick [instructions](#) and guidelines on how to set an anonymous question time box.

→ **QW 2. Icebreakers.** Simple activities like [‘Two Truths and a Lie’](#) or [‘Human Bingo’](#) can get students talking and sharing about themselves. For larger classes, activities like [‘Speed Meeting’](#) can be effective.

In the [literature review](#), it emerged that first-year students have trouble adjusting to new social norms and values at the university, especially when coming from socially different backgrounds (cultural capital, cross-cultural). This can lead them to being afraid of asking for support.

Create Anonymous Communication Channels

You can help your students by providing anonymous communication channels. These are platforms or methods that allow individuals to communicate without revealing their identity. It gives them the opportunity to ask questions

or to seek support, anonymously. However, it is important to note that anonymous communication channels can also enable potential abuse such as cyberbullying or the spread of false information, so responsible use is essential.

- **Use anonymous online forums, chatrooms or messaging apps.** To ensure anonymity, you can also use websites and platforms where users can participate without revealing their real names or personal details. Examples of anonymous online forums and chat rooms include Reddit, 4chan and various specialised forums. Similarly, there are mobile apps that allow users to send messages without revealing their phone number or other identifying information. Some apps even offer end-to-end encryption for added privacy. Examples of these include Signal, Telegram (with secret chats) and Whisper.
- **Set a Question Time Box.** Preparing a Question Time Box is a good way to provide help students ask for support without fear of judgment. It also ensures equal opportunity as all students have a chance to seek support. It also allows for student ownership and it encourages students to take control of their learning by actively seeking help. To set a Question Time Box follow these steps(See Quick Win 1):
 1. Designate a physical or virtual box (or other container) specifically for questions and place it in a visible location within the classroom or learning environment.
 2. Explain the purpose of the Question Time Box to students – it is a safe space where they can anonymously submit questions or seek clarification. Questions can be related to any topic—academic, emotional, or practical. Emphasise that there are no “silly” questions, and that everyone benefits from asking and answering.
 3. Set aside specific times during the class to review the questions and to address them.

Use Icebreakers

Icebreakers are activities or exercises used to introduce people to each other and thus create a comfortable and open atmosphere. They are particularly useful for first-year university students who might feel hesitant or nervous about seeking support, as they break down social barriers, encourage inter-

action and build trust within a group, making it easier for students to voice their concerns and ask for help. For this reason, icebreakers can be a game-changer for first-year students. They can help reduce the anxiety of entering a new environment and make it easier to socialise and feel part of a community.

Teachers can choose and integrate icebreakers by considering the dynamics and size of their class. *See Quick Win 2*

To integrate these into lectures, teachers can set aside a few minutes at the beginning or end of a class for an icebreaker. They can also use themed icebreakers relevant to the course content to make them more engaging.

Use Gamification

To help your students overcome their fear when asking for support, you can use gamification, which is the practice of incorporating game elements into non-game contexts to encourage engagement, motivation, and behaviour change. Studies suggest that gamification can positively impact cognitive, motivational, and behavioral learning outcomes (Sailer & Homer, 2019).

Here are some tips to follow, when trying to gamify your course:

- Create a Points, Badges, and Rewards system
- Set clear Challenges and Goals
- Foster Competition and Social Interaction (create leaderboards, rankings etc.)
- Ensure immediate Feedback and Progress Tracking
- Use narrative and storytelling structures: A compelling narrative or storyline enhances gamification. It gives context to tasks and makes them more meaningful. Participants become emotionally invested when there's a story behind their actions.
- Provide options for customisation and personalisation by letting students choose their paths, preferences, and avatars.

Create a Supporting Classroom Culture

Creating a supportive classroom culture is another way to help students

overcome their fear of asking for support. Creating a supportive culture in your classroom means creating an environment where students feel safe, respected and encouraged to learn. Research consistently highlights the importance of a supportive classroom culture in fostering a sense of belonging, academic motivation, and self-efficacy (Kirby, 2021). A supportive classroom culture creates the foundation for successful learning, emotional growth, and positive interactions, and as an educator, you play an important role in shaping this environment!

Here are some ways you can create a more supporting classroom culture:

- **There Are No Silly Questions:** Reiterate this phrase in a positive light: “Questions are welcome, so please ask them. If you have a question, chances are someone else does too.”
- **Celebrate and Praise:** Acknowledge and celebrate students who ask questions. Praise their curiosity and emphasise that asking questions is a sign of active learning and critical thinking.
- **Communicate the Idea That Everyone Needs Help:** Normalise the concept that seeking assistance is a natural part of the learning process. Share stories of how you or other experts have relied on others for support.

Provide Psychosocial Counseling to Empower Students

Psychosocial counselling integrates psychological and social components to address students’ emotional and relational challenges. It provides a safe space to express these feelings and provide students with coping mechanisms, build self-esteem, and promote resilience. Research shows that this type of counselling can be of great importance to first-year students. For example, this systematic review by Cerolini *et al.* (2023) found that face-to-face and web-based counselling/psychological interventions improve students’ mental health. Another study by Murray *et al.* (2016) showed that university counselling services are effective, with 63% of students showing reliable improvement and 49% showing clinically significant change.

Where possible, universities should provide this support as it promotes overall student wellbeing and academic success. Establishing a quality psychosocial counseling program at a university typically involves:

- **Assessment and planning:** Conduct surveys and focus groups and collect data from existing student support services. Based on these findings, develop a detailed plan that describes the goals, scope, and desired outcomes of the counseling program.
- **Allocate resources: secure funding and resources.** This could mean allocating a budget for hiring counselors, training staff, and setting up counseling space. Seek grants, partnerships, or budget allocations from the college.
- **Hire qualified professionals:** Hire experienced counselors with a background in psychology and social work. Make sure they have experience working with young adults and are able to handle a range of issues, from academic stress to personal and relationship problems.
- **Awareness-raising:** Develop a comprehensive awareness-raising campaign. Use flyers, social media, workshops and orientation programs to inform students about the availability and benefits of psychosocial counseling. Also, encourage an open dialogue about mental health, normalize seeking help, and ensure students understand that it is confidential, non-judgmental, and that they are not alone in their struggles.
- **Integration with student services:** Integrate counseling services with other student support services such as academic advising, health services, and extracurricular activities. This ensures a holistic approach to student well-being.
- **Feedback and improvement:** Introduce a feedback mechanism where students can give anonymous feedback on their counseling experience. Review this feedback regularly to make necessary improvements to the services provided.
- **Ongoing training and development:** Provide counselors with ongoing professional development to stay updated on the latest practices in psychosocial support. Regular training can help them better respond to new student needs.

With these steps, you can create a robust psychosocial counseling service that supports students' mental health and overall well-being.

Further Information

Get more readings and resources in [the detail page](#).

Have you considered that students may not be aware of who to ask for support?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW1. Create a FAQ document.** On this [website](#) you will find guidelines, examples and templates for creating a good FAQ document.

→ **QW2. Set an automatic email reminder.** You can find out how to set up automatic reminders [here](#).

In our [research](#), we have found that students struggle to find the appropriate institutional support structures and at the same time struggle to understand

and adapt to the different communication codes they encounter at university. In particular, they struggle with navigating the admissions process, enrolling, choosing courses independently and navigating the university administration. By implementing some strategies, you can create a supportive environment that guides students towards the appropriate resources and assistance, fostering a sense of independence and confidence in navigating their academic journey.

Create a Peer Mentoring Program

Peer mentoring programmes pair new students with more experienced peers who can guide them through the academic and social landscape of the university. Mentors can answer questions, offer advice and direct mentees to appropriate resources. Peer mentoring creates a supportive community and facilitates knowledge sharing. It can be particularly effective because mentors have first-hand knowledge of the challenges faced by new students. Research has shown that peer mentoring can lead to better academic performance, higher retention rates and a smoother transition to university life (Andrews & Clark, 2011; Rodger & Tremblay, 2003).

Use Ready-Made Documents

Ready-made documents are ready-to-use resources that provide structured information and guidance. They can include faculty and staff directories, step-by-step instructions for common academic processes, and contact information for various departments. Because these documents are readily available, students can find the right contacts and resources on their own without feeling lost or overwhelmed. Pre-prepared documents give students the ability to access information immediately. This self-service approach is beneficial because it encourages students to take initiative and familiarises them with the university's support structure. Studies have shown that students who have clear, written guidance are better able to navigate university systems, leading to increased confidence and academic success (for example Skaniakos *et al.*, 2019).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) are a compilation of common questions and concerns that students may have, paired with short, simple answers.

This strategy can cover a wide range of topics, from academic support to campus life, and is often available online for easy access. FAQs serve as the first point of contact for students seeking quick answers to basic questions. Studies show that FAQ documents are an efficient way to handle individual's inquiries across a wide range of settings (Bakar et al., 2022; Miyamoto et al., 2014; Tomuro & Lytinen, 2004). They reduce the need for direct contact with staff for minor issues, freeing up resources for more complex student needs. FAQs can significantly reduce students' anxiety about university procedures and increase their confidence in getting the help they need. *See Quick Win 1*

Prepare a Template for a Support Request

A support request template is a predefined format or structure that students can use to seek support. This template guides students through the process of identifying their problems, articulating their needs, and directing their requests to the appropriate university support service or staff member. It can include prompts for the type of support needed, preferred methods of contact and any relevant background information that will assist in getting help. If used, you must find a way to remind students of this template regularly. Think about using an automated email reminder, website pins or social media (*See Quick Win 2*). The important thing is that the template is easy to find.

A support request template can demystify the process of seeking help and make it more accessible to students who may not know how to articulate their needs or who to turn to. It is likely that such structured guidance can significantly reduce barriers to communication between students and support services. In this way, students are more likely to seek help as they have a clear pathway to support. Regular reminders also serve to reinforce the availability of help and encourage students to take advantage of the resources on offer (e.g. Joyce & Weibelzahl, 2011; Schwebel *et al.*, 2008). By including this strategy in your toolbox, you will give students a practical tool to help them find support, foster a supportive and responsive educational environment and, of course, make it easier for them to find support when needed.

While it is sometimes necessary to create new documents, your university may already have the documents you need. Most universities have **brochures** outlining the services, facilities and support systems available to students. They often contain visuals and are designed to be engaging and easy to

understand. They are an effective way of communicating information visually and can be of particular interest to new students who are not yet familiar with the university environment. They can be distributed during orientation or displayed in common areas. The visual appeal and ease of accessibility make the brochures a valuable tool for raising student awareness of the support services available and increasing their engagement.

Further Information and References

Consult the detail page on this topic and the text [references here](#).

Have you considered how your teaching methods and forms could enable students to ask questions?



→ **QW1. Get Help to Plan your Activities.** Some applications like [H5P Branching Scenario](#) help you create a flipped learning activity.

→ **QW2. Get Immediate Feedback.** Formative assessment activities can be implemented by using online polls or cards activities like [Picklers](#).

[Research](#) shows that students struggle with academic engagement and performance such as breaking the communication barrier in lectures, tests, work groups and coping with the lack of transversal skills such as note taking, teamwork and problem-solving. Students also struggle with university culture, especially with the educational format. They find it difficult to get used to different modes of assessment, feedback and marking schemes.

Flipped Learning Activities

The flipped classroom method is an instructional approach where students

engage with lecture content at home and participate in active learning during class time (Holm *et al.*, 2022; Knutas *et al.*, 2016). This student-centered approach aims to increase interaction and to support self-paced learning (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016).

To achieve this you can try the following strategies (*see Quick Win 1*):

- **Pre-Class Activities:**

- **Content Delivery:** Students watch videos, read articles, or review other materials at home before class. This phase involves acquiring basic knowledge about the subject matter.
- **Self-Paced Learning:** Students can learn at their own pace, pausing and rewatching the videos as needed, which enables students with different needs to be accommodated.

- **In-Class Activities:**

- **Interactive Learning:** Class time is dedicated to interactive activities such as discussions, problem-solving, group work, and hands-on projects.
- **Teacher Facilitation:** The teacher acts as a facilitator or guide, helping students apply what they have learned and addressing any misconceptions.

Holm *et al.* (2022) have shown that students generally prefer the flipped classroom method over traditional lectures.

Collaborative Learning Activities

Collaborative learning is an active educational approach where two or more students work together towards common goals, developing skills like communication, problem-solving, and understanding different perspectives. Collaborative learning is particularly valuable in online education, where it can reduce feelings of isolation and prepare students for teamwork in professional settings (Lu & Smiles, 2022).

To achieve this you can try the following strategies:

- **Online Discussion Forums**

Activity: Create a discussion forum where students can post responses to

a prompt, share resources, and comment on each other's posts.

ICT Tool: Use using your university's Learning Management System (LMS) platforms such as Moodle, Canvas, Brightspace, Google Classroom, for example to create the discussion forums.

Objective: Develop critical thinking and engage in meaningful discussions about a topic.

- **Collaborative Concept Mapping**

Activity: Students use online tools to collaboratively create concept maps that visually represent the relationships between different concepts in a subject area.

ICT Tool: Use ICT tools like MindMeister, Coggle, Miro, Mural, etc.

Objective: Foster understanding of complex topics through visual representation and group input.

- **Peer Review and Feedback**

Activity: Students exchange their work digitally and provide constructive feedback to one another by using the comment and suggestion features.

ICT Tool: Use ICT tools like Google Docs, Turnitin, Peergrade, Feedback-fruits Peer Review tool, for example.

Objective: Develop critical thinking and editing skills while learning to give and receive feedback.

- **Online Peer Tutoring**

Activity: Pair students with peers who need assistance in specific areas, facilitating tutoring sessions through chat or video conferencing tools.

ICT Tool: Use ICT tools like Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, for example.

Objective: Encourage peer teaching and reinforce the tutor's understanding of the subject.

These activities leverage on ICT tools can encourage active participation, critical thinking, and the development of digital literacy skills.

Formative Assessment Activities

Formative assessment is a continuous evaluation process that occurs during learning, providing feedback to teachers and students to improve instruction and performance (Boston, 2002). It enables teachers to make evidence-based instructional decisions, identify struggling students early, and provide timely interventions (Wilson, 2017). Formative assessment can involve various class-

room techniques, such as surveys and observations, that do not necessarily involve grading (Cevallos Menéndez *et al.*, 2019).

To achieve this you can try some of the following strategies and methods:

Using ICT Tools

- **Google Forms:**

Description: Create surveys, quizzes, and questionnaires to assess student understanding.

Features: Automatic grading, real-time responses, and integration with Google Classroom.

Use Case: Conduct quick assessments after a lesson to gauge comprehension and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.

- **Quizizz:**

Description: An interactive quiz tool that allows students to answer questions at their own pace.

Features: Gamified quizzes, instant feedback, and detailed reports.

Use Case: Assign quizzes as homework or in-class activities to assess individual understanding and track progress over time.

- **Padlet:**

Description: A virtual bulletin board where students can post notes, images, links, and videos.

Features: Real-time collaboration, multimedia support, and customisable boards.

Use Case: Use Padlet for brainstorming sessions, exit tickets, and collaborative projects to gather formative feedback.

- **Plickers:**

Description: A low-tech tool where students use paper cards to answer questions, and the teacher scans the responses with a mobile device.

Features: Real-time data collection and instant feedback.

Use Case: Use Plickers for quick formative assessments without requiring student devices, ideal for gauging class-wide understanding ([See Quick Win 2](#)).

Without Using ICT Tools

- **Exit Tickets:** At the end of a lesson, students write one thing they learned and one question they still have on a piece of paper.
- **Think-Pair-Share:** Students discuss their answers to a question with a partner before sharing with the class, allowing the teacher to gauge understanding.
- **One-Minute Paper:** Students spend one minute writing a quick summary of the day's lesson, helping the teacher assess their grasp of key concepts.

These types of tools help teachers gather timely information about student learning, enabling them to make informed decisions about instructional adjustments and support. The importance of formative assessment lies in its ability to enhance student learning, improve school performance, and raise the quality of education (Menéndez *et al.*, 2019). Overall, formative assessment is a cost-effective approach to improving student learning and performance (Wilson, 2017).

Further Information

Consult further readings and the text references [here](#).

Have you considered that students might be overwhelmed by the university environment?



- QW1. [25 Classroom Icebreakers For College Professors.](#)
- QW2. [Sample Classroom or Group Norms.](#)
- QW 3. [Ideas for STEM Teachers.](#) [Science in school](#) is a website with various experiments and elaborated worksheets for teaching science in the context of everyday life situations.

First-year students face a daunting transition to higher education, encountering larger classes and greater independence. This shift can lead to feelings of being overwhelmed, as they navigate new academic and social expectations. The anonymity of university campuses and the need for self-directed learning add to the [transition challenges](#). Consequently, some students may struggle to engage actively in class discussions.

Establish a Welcoming Environment

Creating a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere will help students

feel valued and comfortable. This will encourage open communication and foster a sense of community among classmates.

- **Icebreaker activities** are an excellent type of activities for establishing a welcoming environment. Icebreaker activities allow students to get to know each other in a relaxed setting. For example, you can divide the class into small groups and have them share fun facts about themselves or discuss their academic goals for the semester. This helps break the ice and fosters a sense of camaraderie among students. [See Quick Win 1](#)
- Facilitating a **classroom norms discussion** (exchange about the norms and expectations for respectful communication and behaviour in the classroom), is another way for creating a welcoming environment. You can provide students with prompt questions to brainstorm and agree upon guidelines that promote inclusivity and mutual respect, such as active listening, valuing diverse perspectives, and avoiding interrupting others. This can help empower students to take ownership of the classroom environment and ensure that everyone feels heard and respected. Once stated, include these norms in the course syllabus. [See Quick Win 2](#)
Some examples of discussion prompts for setting classroom rules can be:
 - What does a productive learning environment look like?
 - What conditions are needed in order for students to feel safe participating in class?
 - What is considered acceptable or unacceptable classroom behavior?

Set Clear Expectations

Clearly outline course objectives, expectations, and grading criteria at the beginning of the semester. Setting clear expectations for students is crucial for their academic success and personal development. Students have strong expectations of quality teaching, including interactive and feedback-rich learning experiences (Handal, 2011). However, these expectations can sometimes be unrealistic, leading to a sense of entitlement (Buckley, 2004). Teachers' expectations play a significant role in student outcomes, with high expectations leading to improved academic achievement. Two learning approaches emerged from the research findings: learning subject matter only to pass and learning subject matter comprehensively to form understanding.

Therefore, it is important for educators to communicate clear and achievable expectations to their students, while also managing any unrealistic ones (Wild *et al.*, 2021).

Setting clear expectations for students is crucial for their success and for maintaining a productive learning environment. Here's how you can establish and communicate expectations effectively:

- **Provide a Subject Outline:** Give students a detailed subject outline at the beginning of the semester. This document should include information about subject objectives, assignments, literature, grading criteria, and any other important expectations.
- **Model Expectations:** Model the quality of assignments you expect from students. Show examples of excellent work and explain why they meet your expectations.
- **Encourage Questions:** Encourage students to ask questions if they are unsure about any expectations and need more clarification.
- **Provide Rubrics:** For assignments and assessments, provide rubrics that clearly outline the criteria for evaluation. This helps students understand how their work will be assessed and what they need to do to achieve specific grades.
- **Offer Feedback:** Provide timely and constructive feedback on assignments and assessments. This helps students understand how well they are meeting expectations and where they need to improve.

Offering Supportive Resources

Providing students resources such as office hours, tutoring services, academic workshops, for example, can help students navigate the challenges of university-level coursework. Offering regular office hours or feedback sessions where students can meet one-on-one with you to discuss questions, concerns, or ideas related to the course, could help students feel supported and valued, reducing the sense of overwhelm and increasing their confidence in participating actively in class.

Furthermore, disseminating information during class regarding the various programs, services, and initiatives offered by the institution for students (including social and health services, psychological counseling, online plat-

forms for skill enhancement, etc.) can mitigate feelings of overwhelm and bolster their confidence to engage actively in classroom discourse.

Connect Content with Professional Applications

Relating course content to real-life situations makes it more meaningful and relevant to students. When they see how the concepts they're learning apply to their daily experiences and profession, they're more likely to engage with the material and understand its importance. It can also motivate students to actively participate in class, learn to question, evaluate, and apply what they've learned in various contexts, which enhances their ability to think critically and solve problems beyond the classroom. *See Quick Win 3*

Incorporate Interactive Teaching Methods

Including interactive teaching methods such as group discussions, peer teaching, and hands-on activities can not only enhance understanding of the course material but also foster participation.

- For **small group discussions**, you can divide the class into smaller groups and provide guiding questions or prompts related to the day's topic and give each group time to discuss and formulate responses. This encourages active participation in a less intimidating setting, allowing students to build confidence in expressing their ideas.
- If you have a Learning Management System available (Moodle, Brightspace for example), you can create an **online discussion forum** where students can continue conversations outside of the classroom. Assign weekly discussion topics related to course content and require students to contribute thoughtful responses. This provides an additional avenue for participation and allows quieter students to express themselves in a more comfortable environment.
- Integrate **peer review sessions** into assignments or projects, where students provide feedback on each other's work. Peer review sessions can significantly alleviate the overwhelming nature of the university context for first-year students in several ways. For instance, engaging in peer review allows students to recognise that they are not alone in grappling with course material or assignments, fostering a sense of camaraderie

and shared experience. This realisation can reduce feelings of isolation and helplessness, which are common contributors to overwhelm ([see Feedback detail page](#)).

Further Information

- A resource offering a variety of [ice-breakers and closing activities](#) with the aim to inspire the use of these strategies to introduce topics, conclude units, and foster a sense of community in the classroom.
- These resources provide practical guidelines for [establishing class expectations, highlighting effective strategies and common pitfalls to avoid](#). They emphasize the importance of clear communication and consistency in fostering a positive learning environment, aiming to enhance student engagement and classroom management.

Have you considered that students might struggle to speak in public?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW1. Mentioning the existence of public speaking clubs** such as as [Toastmasters](#) as a space to practise.

→ **QW2. Introducing the collaborative learning strategy [think-pair-share](#).** It consists of giving students time to first think about their response, then discuss it with a peer, and finally sharing it with the larger group.

→ **QW3. Encouraging the use of oral presentation rubrics.** [This is an example](#) of rubric that could be used for student's self-evaluation or peer evaluation.

Public speaking anxiety, also known as communication apprehension, might prevent students' participation in class due to [personal challenges](#).

Create a Safe Environment

A negative learning environment can make students feel uncomfortable or undervalued. By contrast, a supportive classroom atmosphere, characterised by elements such as respectful communication, can foster student's partic-

ipation in class. For instance, talking about public speaking anxiety and the importance of practising to overcome it, can help students feel less overwhelmed. *See Quick Win 1*

Seek Incremental Participation

Speaking tasks or questions that require long or complex responses could prevent participation. Ideally, we should introduce simple or shorter steps, starting from the individual student thinking, then pairing up with another student to finally presenting their findings to the full group, in class. *See Quick Win 2*

Promote Self-Reflection

Encouraging self-reflection on the experience of participating in class can promote better engagement in public speaking. Students might use rubrics to evaluate their own performance or that of their peers. *See Quick Win 3*

Further Information

Consult [here the annotated bibliography](#) on this topic of helping students overcome public speaking anxiety.

Have you considered that what is expected from students might not be clear?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW1. Create a Glossary.** Provide the students with a glossary of key terms used in your university such as ‘modules’/ ‘term’ etc. [See an example in the Toolkit.](#) At the start of term, you might also provide students with a list of widely used acronyms in your field.

→ **QW2. Breakdown Instructions.** In class, many things can get lost on students, especially if we are not aware of the [curse of knowledge](#). Ensure that information and instructions are shared in clear language that is straight to the point. It can help to break longer instructions into chunks, and/or to make a video for students to refer to later if anything is unclear.

→ **QW3. Give students a rubric, a deadline and go through the assessment orally,** either in class or by recording a short video. You might also explain to the students where and how to submit the assessment. [This is an example of a rubric.](#)

Instructional clarity can be defined as a teacher’s ability to explain or otherwise assist students in thoroughly understanding the material (Metcalf and

Kim, 1992), and as a teacher's capacity to deliver classroom instruction clearly and concisely (Maulana *et al.*, 2016). Clarity of instruction is key with students to avoid any miscommunication or misconceptions. When instructions are clear, students tend to have a better idea of [what is expected of them](#) and therefore tend to be more engaged and active in their learning.

Jargon Buster

The use of jargon and acronyms can often impede students' understanding and their understanding of what is expected of them. Providing students with a list of acronyms used in the respective fields as well as a list of key terms of reference can help the students get a clearer understanding in and out of lectures. *See Quick Win 1*

Clear In-Class Instructions

When too much information or too many tasks are given to students simultaneously, the brain struggles to process the information effectively. Teachers can support student learning by explaining the purpose of a task, giving short, precise instructions, providing written instructions as well as oral ones, and checking for understanding. *See Quick Win 2*

Clear Guidance Around Assessments

Students often lack clarity about assessments, which can lead to confusion about the task. This confusion may result in a lack of engagement with the task. *See Quick Win 3*

Further information

See the references organised by topic [here](#).

Have you considered that students may not know how to interact with a lecturer?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW1. State Your Openness to Dialogue.** At the beginning of the class, explicitly tell students that their questions and comments are welcome and valued.

→ **QW2. Experiment with the Sample Question Tool Kit.** Adapt to your classroom the next [examples](#) provided by The University of Chicago.

→ **QW3. Share personal stories or anecdotes.** Incorporate within your classes brief stories, which might cover moments in which you made mistakes and what you learned from them.

Students might be unsure of the appropriate ways to build connections with academic staff as they adjust to a new social environment. Both the uncertainty about building connections and the adjustment to a new social environment are considered main [transition challenges](#) in the literature review.

Make Explicit Your Openness to Dialogue

Creating a participative classroom environment starts with clear communica-

tion. Let your students know that you value their input and encourage them to ask questions and participate. *See Quick Win 1*

Formulate Different Types of Questions

Utilising various types of questions can enhance students' participation while maintaining the flow of the lesson. Closed questions can help build confidence by eliciting definitive answers, whereas open-ended questions encourage imagination and critical thinking. Different types of questions can also help connect with the diverse learning styles of students. *See Quick Win 2*

Support Intellectual Risk

A classroom culture where mistakes are perceived as failures increases students' fear of participation. However, when students understand that errors are a natural part of the learning process, they are more likely to engage and respond to questions without feeling judged. *See Quick Win 3*

Further information

- Check questioning approaches [here](#).
- [Storytelling in Classroom](#), by Ohio Storytelling Institute.

Have you considered that students may not be used to questioning their learning process?



→ **QW1. Ask Open-Ended Questions.** Pose questions that don't have a single correct answer. This encourages students to think critically and explore different perspectives.

→ **QW2. Normalise Mistakes by Sharing.** Share stories of famous people that failed and how they learned from it. Or provide a personal anecdote where you failed and how it helped you grow. Show that failing is one of the key modes of learning.

→ **QW3. Model Lifelong Learning.** Share your own learning experiences and challenges with students. Show them that learning is a continuous process and that even teachers are always learning.

Students may not yet have the [skills and knowledge to assess their own learning strategies](#), and to reflect on improving themselves in that regard. In high school, students are often exposed to teacher-centred classrooms where the teacher is the authority and may be interpreted as always knowing the 'definite answer'. This changes towards learner-centred classrooms in university,

culminating in projects where it may be the student that is the expert on the topic. This is a transition in both the classroom context and the expectations placed on students. Supporting the transition towards self-reliant learners is therefore important.

Stimulate an Open Atmosphere of Curiosity and Questioning

Daring to ask questions can be challenging for students, and dependent on their cultural background. You can stimulate the voicing of curiosity by incorporating question time and activities with different stakes, and by giving non-judgemental feedback to students. For example, allow for time to ask questions to peers. Asking a question to a peer presents a different threshold than asking a question to the teacher.

In course activities, ask open-ended questions to which there is not one correct answer (*Quick Win 1*). Learning activities where the students are active are more stimulating and engaging than passive ones, like students listening to a lecture.

Emphasise the Importance of Making Mistakes

Students may not be used to failing. For example, some students may find that they struggle more in university than in high school, where they could pass with little effort. Therefore, emphasise that in making a mistake, learning is happening (*Quick Win 2*). Failing is an opportunity to learn what went wrong and how to adapt to tackle the situation differently in the future.

Foster a Mindset of Growth and Lifelong Learning

Students may not yet be aware that learning is a very individual process and that they can steer that process. Share your own learning journey to make this explicit to the students (*Quick Win 3*).

Teach Strategies for Becoming a Better Learner

Share strategies that you use to organise. For example on how to take notes

and plan your working day, and how to reflect on the learning process. Point out that becoming overwhelmed leads to reactive behaviour instead of proactive behaviour, and that taking the time to plan and reflect can help maintain a sense of control.

Further information

- Biggs, J., Tang, C., & Kennedy, G. (2022). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (Fifth edition). McGraw-hill education (UK).
→ This book provides a comprehensive guide on how to create an environment that is good for learning and that encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Have you considered that different teaching approaches and strategies can be more engaging to students?



→ **QW1. [Use Think-Pair-Share](#).** In this method, students are first invited to think about the problem and formulate an answer individually. They then share and discuss their ideas with a neighbour or in a small group. Finally, their results and discussions are shared with the entire class.

→ **QW2. [Use Predict-Explain-Observe-Explain](#).** This works best with demonstrations that allow direct observations, such as in the physical sciences.

→ **QW3. [Connect to Real-Life Applications](#).** Show real-world examples and design an activity that mimics a real-world scenario. This way, students can see the relevance of their studies, which can increase their interest and motivation.

Students must adjust to the [new educational format](#) of university, where they are expected to be active and autonomous. Educational research has shown that student learning improves significantly when they engage in activities

that require active participation (Michael, 2006). Students also balance their workload and set priorities based on factors such as urgency, their level of engagement with the material, and their connections with the community, the teacher, and fellow students.

Balance Deadlines at the Programme Level

By reviewing the deadlines students face and ensuring sufficient time between them, clashes between different learning activities can be avoided. For example, scheduling an evening exam may discourage students from attending class the following morning.

Use Active-Learning Activities to Stimulate Engagement

In active-learning activities, students are encouraged to participate in discussions, problem-solving tasks, and hands-on activities. This active involvement helps them better understand and retain the material.

The activities can be designed to require students to analyse, evaluate, and create, promoting deeper understanding and critical thinking skills. Opportunities for immediate feedback allow students to reflect on their understanding and make necessary adjustments. Working in groups fosters a sense of community and helps students learn from one another. This collaborative environment can enhance motivation and engagement.

Techniques such as **Think-Pair-Share** and **Predict-Explain-Observe-Explain** can be incorporated into the classroom to make learning more active and engaging.

- **Think-Pair-Share**

The think-pair-share technique allows students time to think and process information individually before discussing it with peers (Kaddoura, 2013). Thinking time helps them form their own understanding and opinions. By then pairing up, students can share their thoughts and receive immediate feedback from a peer. This interaction helps them refine their ideas and boosts their confidence. Lastly, sharing ideas with the entire class encourages broader participation. Students feel more comfortable speaking up because they have already validated their thoughts with a

peer.

The technique fosters critical thinking and enhances social skills, as students both learn to articulate their thoughts clearly and listen to others' perspectives. Students are more engaged because they are actively involved in the learning process. *See Quick Win 1*

- **Predict-Explain-Observe-Explain**

This framework can be used to stimulate active learning with an experiment or demonstration (Rickey, 2000). The steps are as follows:

1. First, students are asked to make predictions about the outcome of an experiment or demonstration. This step activates their prior knowledge and curiosity, making them more invested in the learning process.
2. Then, students explain the reasoning behind their predictions. This encourages them to articulate their understanding and thought processes, providing insight into their preconceptions.
3. The experiment or demonstration is then conducted, and students carefully observe the actual outcomes. This step helps them focus on gathering data and comparing it with their predictions.
4. After observing the results, students explain any discrepancies between their predictions and the actual outcomes. This reflection helps them refine their understanding and correct any misconceptions. *See Quick Win 2*

Offer Diverse Activities

Students differ in the types of environments and activities they prefer and feel comfortable with. By offering multiple ways to engage with the material, you can cater to these different preferences while encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones and expand their capabilities. For example, students may work individually, in pairs, or in groups. Speaking up in a large plenary classroom may feel more intimidating than participating in a smaller group of familiar peers.

Make Real-Life Connections

Engaging in activities that mimic real-world scenarios helps students see the

relevance of their studies, which can enhance their interest and motivation. This approach not only fosters engagement but also encourages the application of theoretical knowledge in practical contexts.

Further information and references

- Michael, J. (2006). *Where's the evidence that active learning works?*. Advances in physiology education.
- Kaddoura, M. (2013). *Think pair share: A teaching learning strategy to enhance students' critical thinking*. Educational Research Quarterly, 36(4), 3-24. Accessed at: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1061947>
→ An overview of the Think-Pair-Share research can be found at [Harvard's Center for Learning and Teaching](#).
- Rickey, D., & Stacy, A. M. (2000). *The role of metacognition in learning chemistry*. Journal of chemical education, 77(7), 915.

Have you considered that different communication styles can make students feel more engaged or comfortable to attend classes?



→ **QW1. Active Listening.** Give your full attention to students when they speak, showing that you value their input. This can be done by maintaining eye contact, nodding, and providing verbal affirmations like “I see” or “That’s a great point.”

→ **QW2. Keep Feedback Focussed on Behaviour.** Students cannot change their innate abilities, so instead focus on behaviour. Give feedback on things the students did or did not do, in a non-judgmental and precise manner.

Students experience different types of [communication challenges](#) in class. The nature of classroom interactions affects their level of comfort with speaking up or actively participating in group discussions. By building a connection with students and establishing an open, judgment-free environment, educators can help students feel more comfortable attending and engaging in class.

Provide a Welcoming and Inclusive Space

There are multiple ways you can build rapport, and/or a feeling of connection, between the students and you, and within the community.

- Knowing and correctly pronouncing students' names shows respect and helps build a personal connection.
- Allow students to express their thoughts and opinions, and actively listen (*Quick Win 1*). This can be done through group discussions, feedback sessions, and open forums.
- Be mindful of the language you use, ensuring it is inclusive and free from bias. Avoid assumptions about students' backgrounds or experiences.
- Use teaching materials that reflect a variety of cultures, perspectives, and experiences. This helps all students see themselves represented in the curriculum.
- Make yourself available for one-on-one conversations and be open to students' concerns and suggestions.

Provide Constructive Feedback

Feedback phrased positively and focused on actions rather than innate ability allows students to learn from their mistakes and see them as learning opportunities (*Quick Win 2*). Begin by highlighting what students are doing well before offering suggestions for improvement. Provide specific, actionable feedback to help students understand how they can improve. Finally, make it clear what resources or support they can consult to aid their progress.

When giving feedback, describe your observations and their impact without making judgments or assumptions. Focus on behaviour and actions rather than personal traits. Clearly outline the situation, the impact, and the desired behaviour. For example, for a late assignment submission, you could say: 'I've noticed that your recent assignments have been submitted past the deadline. When assignments are late, it delays the grading process and affects the overall schedule for the class. In the future, please try to submit your assignments on time. If you foresee any issues, let me know in advance so we can find a solution.'

Bring In Your Personal Experiences

Bringing personal experience into the university classroom can enrich the learning environment and make the material more relatable for students. As a teacher, you can share relevant anecdotes that illustrate key concepts, providing real-world applications of theoretical ideas. Using your professional journey to highlight the practical implications of the subject matter encourages students to connect their own experiences to the topics discussed.

Further information

See [this resource](#) from the Columbia University's Center of Teaching and Learning for further information on giving productive feedback to students in the classroom.

Have you considered that students may not be aware of your expectations regarding communications and boundaries?



- QW1. Use [how do I email a teacher sheet](#).
- QW2. Use [‘How do I...?’ and ‘Who do I...?’ resources](#).

Not knowing how to contact you or feeling insecure about it, may be a reason for first year students not seeking help. Clarifying expectations about communication can support students and overcome these barriers, in addition to establishing clear boundaries. These aspects form part of the [transition challenges’](#) main dimensions: University Culture and Academic Engagement.

Clarify Communication Expectations

Clarify your expectations in terms of communication on your course. Include how to communicate, when to expect an answer, and how different courses and teachers may have different expectations.

- **Make Sure to Explain Unfamiliar Terms and Expressions.** It is impor-

tant to keep in mind that students may be unfamiliar with terms, expressions and practices that may seem perfectly clear to people already socialised in university environments. Clarifying expectations is a key part of clear communication. For example, it is not enough to say 'office hours will be on Tuesdays at 3pm', as many students may be unfamiliar with the concept of 'office hours'.

- **Explain and Give Examples of Professional Etiquette.** It is always good to explain matters of social and professional etiquette. Clarifying how students should address you; how they should write an email; or when it is okay to send a reminder, facilitates rather than hinders communication. *See Quick Win 1*
- **Use 'How do I...?' and 'Who do I...?' resources.** These are very helpful in orienting students to communicate clearly. *See Quick Win 2*

Adapt your Communication to the Settings

Adapt your communication expectations to reflect the type of teaching you do and the size of group you have. Having a very flexible approach may work well with small groups, but may quickly become unmanageable in the context of a large lecture. Thus, while an open email policy may be suitable in small groups or in mentor groups, other strategies can be helpful in larger groups.

You can use group-specific techniques that allow students to reach out and communicate while maintaining healthy boundaries:

- **Use Online Open Office Hours.** This strategy is particularly suitable for large groups. Specific office hours can be identified online where students' questions about the course can be answered using an online teaching platform such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Blackboard collaborate, for example. Students can submit any questions they may have via this format, rather than individually via email. Questions can be answered publicly so that all students who log in can benefit from what are often frequently asked questions and benefit from the learning. This can facilitate those students who may be uncomfortable asking questions of their own. The online mode of interaction can also be more accessible for students with scheduling or personal life challenges. In addition, many students may find this mode of communication less intimidating than attending a professor's office. Access to online sessions

can even be done from students' mobile phones. From the perspective of setting boundaries, using online office hours for answering students' questions can help in managing larger groups and allow you to give students clear expectations of when they might receive an answer.

- **Online Discussion Forums Can Provide a Good Way of Supporting Students.** Students can ask questions and also answer questions posted by other students. It is important to monitor these sites, as sometimes students may provide incorrect information. However, the asynchronous mode of interaction can help maintain healthy boundaries.

Further Information

More information about balancing communication and boundaries [here](#).

Have you considered that students may not be aware of university support structures beyond their teachers?



→ **QW1. Facilitate Acces.** Include easily accessible links to university structures of support within your online learning platform.

→ **QW2. Refer to University Structures.** When discussing assignments or parts of the course, quickly mention university level structures of support that may relate to the task at hand.

An important challenge in the transition to university is moving from a system where the teacher is the main point of contact to a more complex environment with multiple services and university personnel. Helping students navigate this new environment can move students in the right direction in terms of accessing the correct support structures and [maintaining a good work/life balance](#).

Facilitate Access to Information

Preparing information about university support structures at a program level

can provide students with important information. As well as clarifying access times for teachers, information can be provided on the range of resources available across different courses.

Here are some strategies that may help:

- **Use a Program Handbook** that contains all the information students may need about the program and university support structures. This should include details of the various structures and services available, along with clear and up-to-date instructions on how to access them.
- **Design an induction program** that provides students with essential information about available resources before they need them. Letting students know about these resources in advance can be highly beneficial. However, it is important to remember that during the transition to higher education, students may struggle to absorb large amounts of information at once. Induction programs should account for this by carefully considering how to best disseminate information in a clear and manageable way.
- It can be helpful for those involved in a university's support network to **organise short workshops or presentations**. Students are more likely to remember and establish contact with these services if they have the opportunity to interact with the personnel involved.

Target Accessible Information within Courses

While programme-wide resources and induction initiatives may convey information to students efficiently, teachers in specific courses remain a vital point of contact for students. Therefore, it is important to develop in-course strategies that guide students towards the appropriate university support structures and services.

- **Adapt Your Resources to the Needs of Your Course:**
Students may face a variety of challenges, but providing too much information at once can be overwhelming. Focus on the types of resources students are likely to need in the context of your course, and ensure they are directed appropriately. For example, identifying resources and services that support academic writing or research presentation will be particularly relevant in courses where these are key components.

- **Introduce the Resources Orally in Class:**

Simply listing resources on the course website or syllabus may leave students unaware of how to access or utilise them. Remember, this may be the first time students encounter the university-specific names for these services, so explaining what each term means and the support provided is essential. Introducing these resources in class, in conjunction with course components for which they are relevant, can help students understand when and how to use them. This can be done at the start of the course and revisited throughout, especially when assignments or activities arise that align with particular support structures.

Further Information

More information about balancing communication and boundaries [here](#).

Have you considered that certain feedback methods are more effective depending on the learning goal?



→ QW1. Example of feedback code and glossary [here](#).

→ QW2. Use These Rubric Examples. [Example 1](#), [example 2](#), [example 3](#).

Getting to communicate effectively with students about their work can help them face the [transition challenges](#). One way to improve feedback involves exploring different approaches to delivering it. Feedback can take many forms – from the explicit oral or written language, to the implicitly offered through gestures and tone of voice.

Use Collective Feedback

With collective feedback you give the same feedback to a group of students at the same time. This can be done in different formats:

- Organising feedback sessions for the entire student group;
- Giving and discussing good and bad examples of assignments or exams;

- Giving model answers and/or exemplars to questions that have appeared on exams in the previous years (*see Further Information*);
- Providing checklists with general focus points and frequently made mistakes.

One useful strategy with large groups is to use an electronic voting system (Woodclap or Kahoot! for example) to quickly get a lot of anonymous answers to a question. If you then display the breadth of answers, allow students to discuss these answers, and then comment on the correct answer (if there is one).

Implement Written Group Feedback

It can take the form of a report on how the class did as a whole on a specific assignment. Ideally, such an overall report can be debriefed in a whole-group session with the students. Students can learn from the feedback on mistakes or errors in other students' work; they can find out which difficulties were commonly encountered and it can save you a lot of time instead of having to write the same feedback comments to commonly-occurring mistakes.

Group feedback can take different formats. Online delivery can take the form of:

- An email sent to the entire group of students,
- A report document uploaded to the LMS of your institution,
- An audio or video message available on the LMS space.

Create online activities (multiple-choice or similar types of question) that enable students to test out their understanding and get instant constructive feedback.

Establish Feedback Written Codes

Rather than writing detailed comments directly on students' work, use a simple code (like a letter, number, or symbol). Create a corresponding 'code glossary' on overheads, paper, or slides. This glossary can be used during group feedback sessions and shared with students as a translation tool, allowing

them to revisit their work and understand your feedback more effectively. *See Quick win 1*

Show Examples Through Screencasts

Screencasting is a technology that allows one to demonstrate how things are done by recording the actions on a computer screen (for example, how to write or use a software, or stages in a calculation, etc). It can also provide a model *answer* or an *exemplar* of a particular problem (*see details on the strategies below*).

Use Rubrics

Rubrics are cover sheets for assignments that can provide the marking criteria for the assignment. Their purpose is to guide both the student and the teacher by providing an easy reference to the criteria and weighting for the various components of the assignment.

Rubrics can focus comments to students in a standard format. They can take various forms and provide standard feedback with the possibility of individual comments. *See Quick Win 2*

Give Opportunities for Self and Peer Evaluation

Instead of directly providing feedback, you can facilitate self-evaluation by engaging students in various activities:

- **Identifying Strengths and Weaknesses:** Encourage students to assess their work against specific criteria before receiving feedback.
- **Creating a Learning Portfolio:** Have students reflect on their accomplishments and curate a selection of their work in a portfolio. It will promote self-assessment and will allow them to showcase their progress.
- **Setting Milestones:** Establish checkpoints for tasks, enabling students to reflect on completed work and plan for future steps, fostering a proactive approach to learning.
- **Organising Peer Feedback:** Facilitate peer-to-peer feedback sessions, which can enhance students' ability to evaluate their own work by

assessing others' work and receiving constructive criticism.

Recycle Written Comments

There are some specialised software and standard word-processing packages that allow “recycling” comments that you can frequently make on common issues in students work.

Further information

- [6 Teacher-Approved Tips for Faster, More Effective Feedback](#)
- Consult the [feedback detail page here](#).

Have you considered that students might need feedback at different moments to be reassured?



→ **QW1. Be Selective.** Comment with detail on two or three things that the student can action.

→ **QW2. Propose a check-in quiz** on a specific concept taken at week one, three, and five of a semester.

→ **QW3. Frequently Made Mistakes List.** Present your students with a set of questions or of the most common mistakes listed, you could ask students to work in groups to find the mistakes and provide the right answer.

Giving feedback at various times during the learning process is crucial to improve knowledge and skill acquisition. In addition, it is also depicted as a significant factor in motivating learning. Feedback is important to deal with the [numerous challenges](#) that present to students during the transition.

Offer Oral Feedback

Quite often, especially when oral feedback is given, it is not recognised by students as feedback. Make students aware that a whole class activity of discussing their essays, activities or exam papers is in fact a feedback opportunity. *See Quick Win 1*

Foster Ipsative Feedback

“Ipsative” refers to comparing an individual’s performance or traits in relation to their own previous performance. It focuses on personal progress and growth, as they compare an individual’s current abilities to their past performance. For instance, you can offer an intake assessment at the beginning of a course to see where students are for that topic or skill, then track their progress across a term and share with them at key points in the semester their performance. Ask your students to analyse whether or not the subsequent one showcased improved performance based solely on that student, not compared to the performance of the class. *See Quick Win 2*

Use Immediate Feedback in Class

An electronic ‘Classroom Communication System’ (CCS) can be used to give immediate feedback to the students on the exercise they have done. They can also compare their progress. Create online activities (multiple-choice or similar types of question) that enable students to test out their understanding and get instant constructive feedback.

Discuss Mistakes

Go over the most common mistakes made by the students. Taking examples from their assignments can illustrate these mistakes. Draw up a document for your students with examples on what to look out for. *See Quick win 3*

Give Feedforward Feedback

Create a recursive cycle or “feedback loop” in which students submit a draft, receive comments, revise the draft, and then resubmit it.

Use Past Questions

Giving students access to past test and exam questions provides helpful clues on what kinds of questions are likely to be asked about certain topics and themes and can provide ‘anticipatory feedback’ on how to tackle particular questions. You can present examples of past semester exams or assignments accompanied by a commentary.

You can also organise a session to explore with students what might constitute good answers to specific questions.

Further Information

Consult the detail page on feedback [here](#).

Have you considered that first-year students might not be used to receiving feedback?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW 1. Use the [template](#)** for goal setting sessions following the SMART model.

→ **QW 2. Provide a [template](#)** for creating an action plan to integrate feedback.

First year students may not be familiar with feedback practices in higher education, which one of the many other aspects they have [to adapt at university](#). By explicitly explaining the intended objectives of feedback – to identify strengths, pinpoint areas for development, guide future learning, etc. – you can help students understand its value in enhancing their academic performance and fostering a growth mindset. Moreover, clarifying how feedback aligns with course objectives and learning outcomes can empower students to actively engage with and use feedback as a means to progress academically.

Explicitly Discuss the Purpose of Feedback

Start the semester by explaining to students that feedback isn't just about

grading; it's about guiding their learning journey. Provide a scenario where a student struggled with an assignment but, through constructive feedback, identified areas for improvement and saw significant progress in subsequent tasks. Emphasise that feedback is like a roadmap that helps them to navigate their academic path effectively.

Provide Examples of Effective Feedback

Share specific instances where feedback led to noticeable improvements. For instance, recount how a student initially struggled with essay structure but, after receiving feedback on organisation and clarity, produced a well-structured paper that earned a higher grade. Showcasing before-and-after examples can illustrate the transformative power of feedback in action.

Engage Students in Feedback Dialogues

Encourage students to share their past experiences with feedback, both positive and negative. Facilitate a discussion where students discuss how feedback impacted their learning and what they perceive as helpful feedback.

You can implement a "Feedback reflection circle": Students are divided into small groups and guided through a series of prompts that encourage them to share personal experiences with feedback, both positive and negative. As the facilitator, circulate among the groups to offer guidance, clarify any misconceptions, and ensure that the discussions remain focused and constructive. By the end of the activity, students share key reflections with the whole class and are encouraged to apply these insights to their approach to giving and receiving feedback throughout the semester. *See Quick Win 1*

Facilitate Feedback Goal mapping

You can propose an activity to make students articulate their learning goals for the semester and discuss how feedback can help them achieve these goals. Start with a goal-setting session where students individually reflect on their academic aspirations for the semester. Ask them to set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals related to their learning objectives.

For instance, if a student aims to improve their presentation skills, explain how feedback on presentation delivery, content, and visuals can assist them in reaching that objective. You can provide students with a worksheet or template where they can map their goals to the types of feedback that would support their achievement (*See Quick Win 1*). By tying feedback to their individual aspirations, students can better understand its relevance and importance.

Create an Action Plan to Integrate Feedback

During the first sessions of the semester, use an assignment to give feedback to your group. Ask them to identify strengths, areas for improvement, and reflect on adjustments they may need to make based on the feedback received.

Have students develop an action plan outlining specific steps they will take to integrate the feedback into their learning process and set deadlines and milestones to track their progress towards their goals throughout the semester. *See Quick Win 2*

Model Effective Feedback Practices

Throughout the semester, you can show examples of feedback comments that are specific, actionable, and encouraging. For instance, instead of simply pointing out errors in a Math's problem, provide guidance on how to correct them and praise the student's effort in attempting challenging problems.

Further Information

Consult the detail page on feedback [here](#).

Have you considered that students might only see feedback as a way of pointing out mistakes?



QUICK WINS

- **QW 1. Use Feedback Templates.** Take a look to [these four templates](#) that can be used as is or adapted for their use.
- **QW 2. Adapt Existing Examples of Rubrics.** An example of analytical rubric can be found [here](#). You can adapt it to your own context.
- **QW 3. Tell an Inspirational Story About Mistakes as Opportunities.** Thomas Edison's [story](#) on the discovery of light bulb.
- **QW 4. Integrating the Non-Violent Communication (NVC) Model.** Examples and exercises can be found in [this resource](#) from the University of California.

Embracing feedback from teachers, even if perceived as negative, might help students in their learning process to improve their [performance](#).

Give Constructive Feedback

Use feedback-giving techniques to provide feedback in a balanced and con-

structive manner, minimising the perception of criticism or negativity. *See Quick Win 1*

Train your Students to Give Feedback

Fostering reflection and a growth mindset centered around clear expectations based on learning objectives through assessment tools such as rating scales and rubrics. Formative and shared assessment can serve for this purpose, including self and peer-assessment. *See Quick Win 2*

Create a Trustworthy Atmosphere

For students to embrace feedback it is vital to celebrate mistakes, promote critical thinking and trust to participate in dialogical feedback dynamics.

Communication is key in this respect. “Trust, resulting from respectful relationships, is a fundamental facilitator of dialogical feedback.” (Carless, 2013). *See Quick Wins 3 and 4*

Further Information

- See the [Reinventing the Feedback Sandwich](#) page by Andy Molinsky.
- Consult the [section of rubrics](#) of the DePaul University
- Carless, D. (2013). Trust and its role in facilitating dialogic feedback. In: Boud, D. & Molloy, E. (Eds.), *Feedback in Higher and Professional Education*. (pp. 90-103). Routledge.

Have you considered that even small experiments with different techniques can make a big difference in large group instructional experiences?

Big lecture halls or large class sizes can pose challenges to both students and instructors alike. For many students entering university, this is the first time they have had to learn in this type of context. Making small experiments with strategies that might assist students with overcoming [some of the issues](#) in adapting to this type of learning environment can be beneficial for everyone. When making experiments in instructional strategies, it is important to first consider what we know about how students learn best. You may want to consult models such as [Laurillard's Conversational Framework](#) to help you reflect on your current learning activities and redesign for more variety and interactivity. A more detailed description of the six different learning types can be [found here](#).



→ **QW1. Intentionally Plan for Questions During Lessons or Lectures.** Embed questions in your presentation slides at key moments during your lecture (ideally every 10-15 minutes), or con-

sider using polling software (Poll Everywhere, Mentimeter, Kahoot, etc.).

→ **QW2. Plan Ahead for Success!** Think in advance about important considerations, such as leaving every third row empty to better facilitate interaction (turn and talk) and to leave space for the instructor to circulate in the room to listen to discussions.

→ **QW3. Use Activities that are Already Available.** Visit websites and resources to find easy activities and routines to increase engagement and interactivity of students. Some great ones to try are: [Harvard Project Zero Thinking Routines \(EN/ES\)](#), [Teach EUR](#) from Erasmus University Rotterdam (EN/NL), [Liberating Structures](#).

Create Teaching and Learning Experiments

The use of new instructional strategies does not have to require big changes or an entire course redesign. Consider experiments with new teaching methods as “research” into teaching and learning. Changing too many variables at once can lead to uncertainty into determining what factors create positive change. In fact, too much change at one time can often overwhelm us into inactivity, rather than result in transformation. Aim for [Kaizen-like](#) small, consistent improvements over a longer period; they will likely add up to more impact in the long run.

1. Choose one new strategy that you think might be a good fit for your students, course, content and context.
2. Try the new strategy with students on several occasions.
3. Reflect on (and document, if possible) what worked and did not.
4. Make adjustments to refine the strategy for better success.
5. Repeat the steps with a new small experiment once you feel ready!

Ask Better Questions

While many instructors frequently ask, “Are there any questions?” in their large class lectures, it rarely leads to good discussion. Additionally, asking yes/

no or closed questions don't often help students develop their critical thinking skills or require them to negotiate meaning or understanding with each other. Plan ahead intentionally to ask better questions at fixed points during your large class teaching. Some tips for asking better questions:

- Refer to Bloom's Taxonomy and use it as a guide for crafting questions that elicit the appropriate level of thinking that you wish to elicit from students.
- Ask [open ended questions](#), and allow students to engage in a [think-pair-share](#) activity to answer.
- Allow sufficient wait time for students to think about their answers and/or respond to a question. Find ways to ensure that sufficient time is allowed (set a timer, count silently, etc.) before asking students for their answers.
- Follow up with clarifying and probing questions. See some good examples [here](#) from Indiana University.

In a large classroom or lecture hall, it is often difficult to hear students when they are asking, or responding to, a question. Consider the use of a device such as a "Catch Box" which is a microphone in a soft, foam container that can be safely tossed around the room. [This page](#) from Bowdoin College in Maine (USA) has some good information and tips for using a Catch Box.

Asking better questions can facilitate more critical thinking, assist students with better learning strategies and metacognitive thinking, and help build problem solving skills. *See Quick Win 1*

Promote Peer Instruction

[Peer instruction](#) is a form of collaborative learning where students engage with core course concepts and then explain those concepts to one another. It is often a variation of "flipped" learning. Crouch and Mazur (2001) note that "unlike the common practice of asking informal questions during a lecture, which typically engages only a few highly motivated students, the more structured questioning process of [peer instruction] involves every student in the class" (p. 970). Peer instruction usually happens in the following steps:

1. Students prepare outside of class time by engaging with reading, videos or other content.

2. The instructor gives some information on the topic, then asks a carefully designed question.
3. Students have time to think about the question for a few minutes, then commit to an answer.
4. Students work in pairs or small groups with other students who have a different answer than they do. The goal is to come to an agreement on the correct answer(s).
5. The instructor wraps up with an explanation.

Peer Instruction can be a helpful strategy for building better relationships, teamwork, and communication skills, for connecting course content with real-world application, and in helping students develop their soft skills. *See Quick Win 2*

Use Active Learning Techniques

There are many quick and easy activities that you can consider making small experiments with in your instruction in order to vary pedagogical strategies. These can be incorporated as entrance/exit tickets, discussion/reflection interactions, understanding checks, and more. By including more activities that involve students interacting with each other about course content, there are opportunities to break the communication barrier, develop teamwork skills, and develop thinking/learning skills that can help students with their work outside of the classroom as well. There are several instructor-friendly websites where you can easily find different activities to experiment with. *See Quick Win 3*

Further Information

- For more information about **peer instruction**, visit [this informative page](#) from Vrije University Amsterdam, watch [this video](#) from Dr. Eric Mazur, or consult the e-book, [Effective Teaching in Large STEM Classes](#).

Have you considered using ‘humanization’ strategies and techniques in order to help build connections?

Big lecture halls or large class sizes can pose challenges to both students and instructors alike. The larger the class size, the more difficult it may feel to make connections and build relationships. Experimenting with humanization strategies might assist students with overcoming [some of the issues](#) in adapting to this type of learning environment, and improve the learning climate for both students and instructors alike. “In humanized courses, positive instructor-student relationships are prioritized and serve ‘as the connective tissue between students, engagement, and rigor’... In any learning modality, human connection is the antidote for the emotional disruption that prevents many students from performing to their full potential ([Pacansky-Brock, 2020](#)). Humanization can contribute to higher levels of wellbeing, and can also influence student engagement, motivation, and academic achievement.



QUICK WINS

→ **QW1. Help Students Feel Connected to you by Posting an Introduction Video.** Share important course information, but also some personal tidbits, to help students feel like they know a bit

more about you and who you are as a person before coming to the first class!

→ **QW2. Design a Syllabus Scavenger Hunt!** Give students tasks to work on that involve collaboration and discussion, right from the first day of class, such as reviewing and answering questions about the syllabus together.

→ **QW3. Use “Bumper Videos” to Support Learning of Difficult Content.** If you notice students struggling with a particular topic, create a short (2-3 minute), imperfect video for students to watch that helps give clarification. It demonstrates that you are paying attention to student needs and trying to be inclusive, which can help build feelings of trust.

“Connections” can be made, even in large classes, in multiple ways:

- Instructor – student connections
- Student – student connections
- Student – content connections

Instructor – Student Connections

It is important to allow students to see that you are human, and experiment with ways to build more teacher-student connection into teaching and supervision activities. This can be done in a number of ways, even in large classes or lectures, often with the help of videos. Video is a powerful tool that can help [impact the perception of social presence](#) (Thomas, West & Borup, 2017).

- Create a **welcome video** introducing yourself as the instructor that you post in your learning management system (ie: Moodle, Canva, Brightspace, etc.) before the course begins. Include important information about your course and/or teaching philosophy, but also mention some personal information about yourself, such as where you grew up, how you came to be interested in your research/specialty field, what you enjoy most about teaching, etc. *See Quick Win 1*
- In a large group, it is difficult to provide individual feedback to students,

however, making a single **feedback video** for the entire group with more general observations and advice on a regular basis (weekly, bi-weekly, etc.) can be very helpful. Look for overall themes, issues, points of struggle, etc. that you are noticing in general with students, and share this feedback with the whole class. The video can be shared via the course learning management system, in an email, etc.

It is not important to have videos be long or perfect. In fact, the [Pratfall Effect](#) (Aronson, Willerman & Floyd, 1966) leads us to believe that people who are considered highly competent are found to be more likeable when they perform an everyday blunder (ie: making small mistakes, saying, “ummm” a few times, etc.) than those who don’t!

Student – Student Connections

Intentionally plan your synchronous (face-to-face) moments of instruction so that they are effectively used, preferably for application of content, negotiation of understanding, conversation, community building, and idea exchange. You can find many ideas for how to do this on [our previous page](#) where we discussed the use of peer instruction, questioning, and other active learning techniques. All of these can be helpful strategies for building better relationships, teamwork, and communication skills, for connecting course content with real-world application, and in helping students develop their soft skills.

Incorporate some relationship-building activities right from the first day of class. Hogan and Sathy (2022) suggest ideas such as having students work in smaller groups (3-4) to complete a syllabus quiz or scavenger hunt. This could be done live in class, or as an assignment in the learning management system using grouping tools. Students can review the syllabus in their groups and respond to questions such as, “Find one topic that you are all interested in learning about and tell me why”. Working together on a task right away can help students get to know each other and build connections with each other.

See Quick Win 2

Student – Content Connections

As with instructor-student connections, video can be a powerful tool for making deeper connections between students and content. If you, as the instructor, notice that there is a concept, strategy, or piece of content that students

struggle with, either currently or historically in other runs of the course, consider making and sharing a [bumper video or microlecture](#) on that topic to share with students. Bumper videos are 2-3 minute, visually oriented videos that are designed to either preview a topic or demystify a sticky concept. They incorporate visual elements like icons and images and are set to the narration of your voice. Microlectures are brief, 5-7 minute instructional videos that are designed to achieve specific objectives. The skills your students acquire in your microlectures should build upon content taught in your lectures, classes, and/or previously shared video content, as pointed out by Pacansky-Brock. *See Quick Win 3*

An added benefit of creating short, content-related videos for students is can further assist with instructor-student connection. It demonstrates that you are paying attention to student learning needs and trying to be more inclusive. Video is inherently differentiating, allowing students to watch at a convenient time, to replay as many times as needed, to slow down or speed up the playback, and to use assistive technology such as subtitles. Demonstrating that you want to support students with their learning in different ways can help build a culture of trust in the classroom. When you personally create these videos, it also helps students feel more connected to you, as they are hearing your voice, and possibly seeing your body language, mannerisms, facial expressions, etc. (if you choose to be visible in the video). If desired, you can also let your personality shine through in the narration, for example, through anecdotes, a sense of humour, analogies, stories, etc.

Further information

- Aronson, E., Willerman, B., & Floyd, J. (1966). The effect of a pratfall on increasing interpersonal attractiveness. *Psychonomic Science*, 4(6), 227–228. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03342263>
- Hogan, K. A., & Sathy, V. (2022). *Inclusive teaching : strategies for promoting equity in the college classroom* (First edition). West Virginia University Press.
- Rawle, F. (2022). Humanizing learning. University of Toronto Mississauga and the Humanizing Learning Team. <https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/humanizinglearningframework/>

- Thomas, R. A., West, R. E., & Borup, J. (2017). An analysis of instructor social presence in online text and asynchronous video feedback comments. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 33, 61–73. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2017.01.003>

Have you considered that your first-year university students may have difficulty comprehending how the university differs from secondary school?



→ **QW 1. Who Will Give the Best Advice?** Download the instructions of the challenges game [here](#).

→ **QW 2. Challenges Comparison Table.** [This document](#) can be used in pairs to help students organise their thinking and reflect.

→ **QW 3. Implement the Myths and Realities Game or a Personification Activity** by following the instruction [here](#).

Depending on the educational model high-school students have been exposed to, they will need more or less help to adapt to university settings. A list of associated challenges can be found in [the START Challenges Mindmap](#).

Discuss the Transition Challenges

The transition from high school to university is a process that involves more than a physical change in setting. It involves personal, social, academic, and cultural aspects that are not always obvious to students, and which often remain unexplained. Offer students time and tools to reflect on the transition process.

- **Propose “The Challenges Game”** that encourages students to express themselves about the transition. *See Quick Win 1*
- **Provide a Comparative Table Incorporating Different High School and University Characteristics.** The first column lists all elements involved such as note-taking, time management, evaluation, etc. The second is dedicated to high school, and the third to university. Students must complete the table from their experience and share it with a partner. *See Quick Win 2*

Make Student and Teacher Roles Explicit

A key transitional challenge is understanding how university-students’ and teachers’ roles differ from those in secondary school, including new communication codes.

- **Use exercises to help students understand the different roles of university students and teachers.** *See Quick Win 3*
- **Discuss the importance of being an autonomous learner** as a university student and clarify expectations around the demands of studying at university: e.g. the amount of time and depth needed in preparing for assignments.
- **Explain the relationship differential and professional distance between student and teacher at a university.** This aspect can be influenced by differences in national and regional cultures. Discuss what makes a university-student relationship with a teacher different from high school in your context. Does your university community use hierarchical communication or a more egalitarian one between teachers and students?

Be Explicit in your Course Requirements

To avoid any confusion, explicitly state what you expect from students on your course. You can explain how you expect them to participate; what you expect from the homework; what readings are useful in your course; and the evaluation format and criteria.

- **Give your students some hints** for their note-taking and establish a personal note-taking code.
- **Make sure your presentation support highlights the key aspects** of the content to be delivered.
- When explaining orally, remember to **emphasise the main points**.

Offer Extra Support When Needed

Students who need the most teaching support in university are often those who have the most difficulty asking for it. These are the same students who in high school were identified directly by their teachers as needing some extra support. In the larger university setting, it is difficult for a teacher to identify someone in need. To facilitate the first contact:

- **Propose a weekly time** where students can have an opportunity to talk with you about any difficulties in their transition period.
- **Identify your preferred channels, times and formats of communication** with your students.
- **Clarify your office hours** and give students the option of choosing the format of meeting they feel most comfortable with e.g. online; in person; in a group etc. ([go to the Balanced boundaries page](#)).

Further information

[Consult here](#) if you want to read further about the challenges students face with during their first year, based on what research has found in recent years.

Have you considered that first-year students may have a different understanding of what the word 'study' means?



- **QW 1. Propose [this format](#) to your students** to help them organise their time.
- **QW 2. Use [KWL Charts](#)** to support students in the information collection process.

First-year university students often have a limited idea of what it means to study in the university context. Some students can reduce their studying to a cursory viewing of the content before a test, or just to reading notes. This is closely connected to the ideas students have about the evaluation objectives and often manifests in challenges related to [the academic engagement](#).

Discuss the Meaning of Studying

Guide students to reflect on studying by explaining the cognitive processes involved in learning (attention, perception, memory and problem-solving).

Help them identify when it is useful to memorise some information and when other methods are more suited.

Discuss with your students when, apart from the test, studying is relevant: e.g. reviewing and clarifying content before class thus reducing the risk of getting lost in more challenging content; using memory notes to facilitate ease of understanding when a topic has been difficult to grasp, etc.

Explain What Good Study Conditions Are

Effective studying requires finding a suitable time and place to concentrate. Encourage students to create a comfortable, quiet space with minimal distractions for their study sessions. Similarly, emphasise the importance of choosing a time when their minds are fresh and receptive to learning, avoiding periods when they may feel hungry, tired, or distracted.

Help Students Organise their Study Time

Encourage students to use a calendar to schedule specific times during the week dedicated to studying. They can follow these steps:

1. Set study goals based on the difficulty of the content as well as their personal interests and dislikes.
2. Break down assignments into manageable tasks.
3. Estimate the time needed for each task and note the deadlines.
4. Schedule time for each task, ensuring a balanced daily workload that includes non-study-related activities. *See Quick Win 1*

Teach Students to Read Actively

Share some effective reading and studying techniques with your students. For example :

- **Highlight and underline:** Mark important passages, key terms or concepts using different colours to denote different types of information.
- **Marginal notes:** encourage students to write brief summaries, questions, reactions, or connections in the margins of the text. Explain how

students can use their own personal codes when taking notes, e.g. using special characters; underlining; using abbreviations, drawings; or using exclamation marks to denote important parts of the content, etc.

- **Use Graphic Organisers:** Ask students to create concept maps or diagrams to visually represent the main ideas and relationships within the text. You can provide templates for graphic organisers like KWL charts (Know, Want to know, Learned) or Venn diagrams to help students organise information and make connections. *See Quick Win 2*

You can also help students improve their reading comprehension by having them read a section individually, and then discuss their thoughts with a partner before sharing them with the whole class.

Use Collaborative Note-Taking

Assign students to small groups and have them collaborate on note-taking for each class session. Rotate the note-taking responsibility among group members, and review the notes collectively at the beginning of the next class. This can be done by asking each group to exchange their notes with another group and spend a few minutes reviewing them. Groups should highlight the main concepts and identify the strengths of the other group's work. Encourage a brief class discussion to share common observations and offer tips for improving note-taking

For some sessions, you can collect the collaborative notes from each group at the end of the class. At the beginning of the next session, review the notes with the class, highlighting key points, common themes, and any discrepancies or gaps..

Apply Quizzes, Polls and Reflection Papers

Use quick quizzes or polls during or at the end of each class to reinforce key concepts and assess student understanding. Tools such as Kahoot, Poll Everywhere, or even simple hand-raising can be employed. This approach allows you to provide immediate feedback to both students and yourself, reinforcing learning and identifying areas that require further clarification.

Further information

- The Open University created [this comprehensive guide](#) to enhance active reading and help students develop more effective reading techniques.
- [This chapter](#) from the “College & Career Success” handbook explains how reading at the University is different from reading in high school and the importance of engaging with the text through various techniques.
- [This blog post](#) from the University of Sussex outlines five effective strategies to promote active reading among students, enhancing their engagement and comprehension.

Have you considered that this might be the first time first-year students have been added to institutional mailing lists?



- **QW 1. Inform or negotiate with your students** about how and when you will communicate with them about class.
- **QW 2. Bring Relevant Institutional Topics into your Classroom Conversation.** Remember to discuss the information rather than re-telling it.
- **QW 3. Tell students where they can find the answer to a question** rather than answering the question directly.

Universities rely heavily on email communication, which can be overwhelming for students who are not accustomed to distinguishing between important and less relevant information. Challenges in this area can be grouped into the following categories, as identified in [the START Challenges Mindmap](#): Administrative Formalities: Educational Format: Communication Codes: Social Engagement.

Explain the Purpose of Mailing Lists

Collective emails play a crucial role in keeping the university community informed about a wide range of topics. For example, emails may:

- Clarify logistical arrangements, such as changes in classrooms or road closures.
- Share information on specific political positions, whether internal, national, or international.
- Inform students about upcoming social activities and events.

Beyond their practical aspects, these emails help students stay informed about what is happening within their institution, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging collective participation in university life.

Take a moment in your class to explain the importance of these emails for your students' experience of student life. *See Quick Win 1.* Be explicit about the university's expectations regarding communication. Emphasise that reading and being guided by these emails is essential for staying engaged and navigating student life successfully. *See Quick Win 2.*

Develop Expectations about Bulk Communication

Often students don't read emails, assuming that they are not relevant for them, or that someone else will provide them with the relevant information.

- **Entice your students to read their mail** by referencing the information in class. Rather than providing the information, encourage and guide your students to find the relevant university information themselves. *See Quick Win 3*
- **Show them how to quickly find out the importance of their mail** by analysing the title, date, topic, and sender.
- **Make it clear that they can tell you if they are missing information** or context relating to the information.

Further information

Emailing lists can contribute to building university knowledge through “warm knowledge” (e.g. student associations interactions) and “cold knowledge” (e.g. institutional communication), as conceptualised by Slack *et al.* (2014).

→ Slack, K., Mangan, J., Hughes, A., Davies, P. (2014). ‘Hot’, ‘cold’ and ‘warm’ information and higher education decision-making. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(2), 204–223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2012.741803>

Have you considered that the university structure might be bigger than first-year students are used to and that the amount of information the students have to deal with is larger?



→ **QW 1. You will find an editable example of a resource map [here](#).** And a [table to help gather information](#) according to different situations.

→ **QW 2. Use [this example of check-in](#) questions** at the end of your class.

First-year students might find it overwhelming to get the information they need in order to adapt to their [new university context](#). You can ease their transition in a variety of ways.

Discuss Information Collection and Filtering

Encourage students to reflect on the variety of sources they can use to gather

specific information, such as journals, magazines, websites, books, encyclopedias, individuals, and university portals.

Discuss how each source serves a different purpose, from accessing in-depth research in academic journals to obtaining quick overviews from encyclopedias or gaining practical insights from conversations with peers.

Clarify the purposes of the university's communication channels to help students navigate them effectively. Official emails and portals deliver institutional announcements, course updates, and administrative deadlines, while academic resources like the library and departmental newsletters provide subject-specific information. Informal conversations with peers, faculty, and staff offer insights into unwritten norms, success tips, and engagement opportunities. By valuing both formal and informal communication, students can adopt a balanced approach to information gathering, enhancing their effectiveness and resourcefulness.

Guide Students to Discover the University

Some activities can support students in approaching university services for the first time.

- **University Services Identification.** During the first weeks of the semester, assign students to small groups and task each group with researching and presenting information about a specific university service (for instance, the library, writing centre, tutoring services, career services, health services, IT support, etc.). Provide guidelines and resources (such as university websites, brochures or contacts) for students to gather information about their assigned service. Encourage students to investigate the services' mission, location, operating hours, available resources, and how students can access them. Each group should create a concise presentation covering the key aspects of their assigned service. This could be done in any format (e.g. slideshows, posters, short videos, songs). Each group will then present their findings to the rest of the class. After all the presentations, conduct a brief quiz or poll (you can use electronic tools such as Kahoot or Woodclap) to reinforce the information. As a possible follow-up, you can ask students to create a handout or digital guide summarising the key points from each service, including con-

tact information and how to access the services. You can also encourage students to visit at least one service and report on their experience.

- **Campus Orientation and Scavenger Hunt.** Organise an interactive campus tour combined with a scavenger hunt. Divide students into small groups and provide them with a map and a list of key locations to find, such as the library, student services, main lecture halls, cafeterias, etc. Have a brief presentation or information session about the services available once you get there. Additionally, consider that information might be available on the university website, or that some universities may already offer online virtual tours that can be integrated into this activity.

Review the Course Syllabus

Dedicate part of the first class to thoroughly reviewing the syllabus and highlighting key resources such as textbooks, online platforms, and support services. Create a “resource map” linking topics to available resources. *See Quick Win 1*

Take Time for Weekly Check-ins

During the first weeks of the semester, at the beginning or end of the class, conduct a quick check-in with students to see how they are managing the course content and workload. Use a simple survey or an informal discussion to identify any issues or questions and address common concerns and questions in the following class. You can use an electronic platform to create polls and questionnaires such as Wooclap, Google Forms, etc. *See Quick Win 2*

Further information

[Consult here](#) if you want to read further about the challenges students face with during their first year, based on what research has found in recent years.

Have you considered that students might not yet have had the opportunity to learn this knowledge?

At university students will have to [adapt to a high level of difficulty and requirements](#). They may even have not seen many contents that will be necessary to follow the course normally. It becomes necessary to bridge the gap between their high school education and university requirements.



- **QW 1. Offer practical, non-mandatory sessions** in small groups to promote peer collaboration.
- **QW 2. Try to have small groups for tutoring** in order to promote interaction with students and to save time for you.

"Remedial" Courses

Organise small, non-mandatory sessions at the beginning of the academic year to address a lack of basic/ background knowledge (Büchele, 2020). Small sessions at the beginning of the academic year may provide students with the necessary background. Remedial sessions might be introduced for students needing to gain that knowledge. *See Quick Win 1*

Provide Online Material

Prepare material about the required knowledge and give students online access to it. As time is limited and doesn't allow to cover this basic knowledge, provide a small document or short videos to focus on these key topics and to fill the knowledge gaps. These “knowledge pills” can help filling knowledge gaps in a short time (Bolisani *et al.*, 2022).

Offer Tutoring

Offer tutoring services from the very beginning; students may even not be aware that this is possible, so it would be helpful to talk about it early in the module. When organising the tutoring you should balance your availability with the benefits of active learning and interaction with them. *See Quick Win 2*

Further Information

- A study about “Remedial Courses” in Germany is done demonstrating their necessity in:
 - Büchele, S. (2020). Bridging the gap – How effective are remedial math courses in Germany? *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.100832>
- In order to study faster, the division of knowledge into small parts as “knowledge pills” fits today’s needs of learners to acquire the required knowledge in a short time. You can find more information about knowledge pills in:
 - Bolisani, E., Scarso, E., Zieba, M., Durst, S., Zbucnea, A., Lis, A. M., & Kassaneh, T. C. (2022). Knowledge pills in Education and Training: A Literature Review. *Proceedings of the 23rd European Conference on Knowledge Management*, 89-96, <https://doi.org/10.34190/eckm.23.1.796>

Have you considered that students might have forgotten the background knowledge?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW 1. Use [Think-Pair-Share](#) Technique.** Pose a question or problem, let students spend some time reflecting, then discuss in pairs and finally share with others.

→ **QW 2. Use an Interactive Quiz or Polling Tool.** Create a quiz where students may test their understanding and have a better idea about what is expected from them.

→ **QW 3. Create Concise Online Material** covering the key background knowledge they need to follow the course appropriately.

Students will have to [manage learning more content at a faster pace](#) with little time to review previous knowledge. They might have covered all the necessary background information, but no longer remember everything.

Let Students Share Their Knowledge

Active learning helps to impress content better than passive learning (Roediger and Butler, 2011). They can reactivate each others' background knowledge

by discussing the topic among themselves. You may pose a question and let students spend some time reflecting before discussing and sharing with others (think-pair-share) may be of help. *See Quick Win 1*

Review the Background Knowledge

Some content can be absolutely necessary to follow the class properly. An [active learning strategy](#) (e.g.: “entry ticket”) or a brief review of those contents can be used at the beginning of the lecture in order to (re)activate prior knowledge. Even if done quickly, this will help students remember the necessary background information. This will also enable students to know what they need to study to catch up. *See Quick Win 2*

Provide Background Material

We may focus only on providing material directly related to the content of the subject but prior knowledge is also necessary so providing also material related to it would be of help for students. This prior knowledge is not new for them, they simply need to remember so it may be better concise and brief. This will not only help on acquiring the knowledge but also have a good idea about what they need. See Quick Win 3. *See Quick Win 3*

Further Information

- It is proven that active learning techniques help boost retention much more than passive learning. A study about this can be found in:

→ Roediger, H.L. and Butler, A.C (2011). The critical role of retrieval practice in long-term retention. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 15,(1), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2010.09.003>

Have you considered students may understand their classmates better than the teacher?



→ **QW 1. Spark discussions in class with motivated students** to facilitate and encourage others to participate.

→ **QW 2. Work in Small Groups.** When possible, create working groups and try to distribute and encourage motivated students to help their classmates in the group.

→ **QW 3. Offer resources** where motivated students may share material, notes, help in forums, etc. You may use Learning Management Systems like [Moodle](#), Coursera, Blackboard or others.

Even unintentionally, there may be barriers between teachers and students, especially at the beginning of a module. Students may find help in their classmates and can create peer support groups. In those groups, motivated students may play an important role by helping their peers. A good [integration with the academical community](#) is an indicative of progress and success.

Promote Participation in Class

Many students find it difficult to participate in class, especially at the beginning of a discussion. Motivated students can encourage a more engaging learning environment for everyone by actively participating in such discussions. Their enthusiasm can be contagious. *See Quick Win 1*

Encourage Peer Tutoring

Motivated students can explain concepts and answer questions in a more friendly and closer environment. This may reinforce their knowledge of the subject and being helpful for them to develop explanation skills. *See Quick Win 2*

Foster a Collaborative Environment

Students may miss lectures or may feel lost sometimes when taking notes. Motivated students may share clear and well-organised material with classmates. Preparing material for sharing would be of help not only for their peers but for them as it clarifies self understanding and reinforces collaboration and communication skills. *See Quick Win 3*

Further Information

- Some studies report that the final grade of a student can be improved with a small but regular dedication to peer tutoring.
 - Munley, V.G., Garvey, E. and McConnell, M.J. (2010). The effectiveness of peer tutoring on student achievement at the University level, *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings*, 100, 277-282. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27805004>

Have you considered that there may be students that can go further?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW 1. Pose challenges to students** like thinking about a particular question or solving a more complex problem. Try to recognize their achievements as it may also boost their motivation.

→ **QW 2. Propose that students can prepare new material** like an experiment, demonstration, problem, activity, etc. They can come up with new ideas and may test and provide feedback beforehand.

→ **QW 3. Offer a letter of recommendation** for future opportunities like research programs or internships. Here are [some ideas](#).

Knowledge is always evolving. Motivated students must [engage with research](#) and keep looking continuously for more information. It is important to offer them contents that represents an intellectual challenge. Some additional activities may deepen their knowledge.

In-depth Exploration

Motivated students can go into more complex topics related to the subject. Those complex topics can be challenges for them and can make learning more engaging. Challenges promote active learning that leads to deeper understanding.

It is important to balance difficulty. They should not so easy as to bore them and not too hard as to become frustrating. *See Quick Win 1*

Prepare New Material

By collaborating with motivated students, teachers can create more engaging and effective learning experiences for the entire class. Motivated students can detect sections that are too difficult, lack of explanations and can provide feedback beforehand. They can also come up with new ideas. *See Quick Win 2*

Facilitate Future Connections

For students who demonstrate strong skills and motivation, you may facilitate future connections with professors or researchers in the field. One way to facilitate that connections is to provide them a letter of recommendation.

A letter of recommendation adds credibility and weight to a student's future application. It may outline strengths and achievements relevant to the desired position making them a more compelling candidate. *See Quick Win 3*

Further Information

Teachers are encouraged to promote personalisation and individualisation of the teaching-learning process when possible. That includes offering students alternatives to the general content. In Spanish, you can consult:

→ M. Gómez-Puerta, R. Rodríguez & E. Chiner (2023). *Guía de*

recomendaciones para la atención del alumnado universitario con altas capacidades intelectuales, Universidad de Alicante, Edit. Limen-
cop. ISBN: 978-84-09-52716-8. Available here: [https://rua.ua.es/
dspace/handle/10045/135040](https://rua.ua.es/dspace/handle/10045/135040)

Have you considered that students need more time to assimilate the material?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW 1. Video/readings Pre-Lecture.** Provide the students with the materials: key readings, video summaries, lecture notes pre-lecture. [This video](#) shows an example of this.

→ **QW 2. Graphic Organisers.** Using summaries of key information or graphic organisers can really help students who have diverse needs. Here are some [examples of graphic organisers](#).

→ **QW 3. Subtitles.** One easy tool to use if using PPT, is to enable the live captions for students who might have auditory issues. You might also enable the subtitle mode in PPT under 'slideshow' – 'subtitles'.

Higher education institutions strive to provide inclusive learning environments that accommodate diverse student populations. The transition from post-primary education to Third level presents students with [several challenges](#): new academic demands, necessitating adjustments in learning strategies and study habits. For students with special needs, this transition can be particularly daunting, requiring additional time to adapt to new instructional

formats, academic expectations, and social dynamics. Therefore, students' diverse learning needs present challenges that demand nuanced pedagogical approaches.

Flipped Classroom Approach

The Flipped classroom approach or flipped instruction can be defined as blended learning where students learn new content prior to the lesson/lecture. This content might be readings, online material such as watching videos for instance. During the lectures, more personalised guidance and interaction with students is prioritised. This is also known as backwards classroom, flipped classroom, reverse teaching, and the Thayer Method. This approach will encourage autonomy in learning for your students and enable them to be more engaged in the lecture. *See Quick Win 1*

Chunking Information

Students with diverse learning needs such as dyslexia, attention deficit, autism for instance, may struggle with sustained attention, reading comprehension, or organising course materials. To accommodate such needs, teachers might implement strategies such as chunking information, providing graphic organisers, and offering extended time for completing tasks or assessments. *See Quick Win 2*

Using Technology-Aided Tools

Technology offers a range of accessibility features and tools, which might support student needs. Strategic integration of these facilitates a more inclusive learning environment. By leveraging such tools, teachers can mitigate barriers to learning, promote equitable access to educational opportunities, and foster a culture of inclusivity within higher education institutions. An example is allowing students to use speech to text software if they have difficulties writing. There are some simple strategies that will enable students to access material more readily in lectures. *See Quick Win 3*

Further Information

Consult the references about this subject [here](#).

Have you considered asking them what instructional styles suit them best?



QUICK WINS

→ **QW 1. Incorporate interactive discussions, visual aids, multi-media resources, and hands-on activities** to engage students in their learning. Offer course materials in multiple formats—such as videos, readings and podcasts—to accommodate different learning preferences and ensure all students can access the content in ways that suit their learning needs.

→ **QW 2. Offer diverse methods for students to demonstrate their understanding and learning**, such as essays, short reflec-

tions, projects, presentations, quizzes, or creative assignments, allowing them to showcase their knowledge in a way that plays to their strengths.

→ **QW 3. Implement regular formative feedback opportunities**, such as quick polls or informal discussions, to gauge students' understanding and learning preferences, allowing you to adjust your teaching methods in real-time to better meet their learning needs.

All students have [different challenges](#) during transition that can be differently addressed. [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) is a teaching framework that supports all learners by providing multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). In practice, [UDL involves offering diverse ways for students to engage](#) with material, presenting information through various formats, and allowing students different methods to demonstrate their understanding and apply what they've learned. The "Plus-One" approach (Tobin & Behling, 2018) complements UDL by encouraging educators to make small, incremental adjustments to increase accessibility. Instead of overhauling entire courses, teachers can add "just one" more way for students to access content, engage with the material, or express their learning.

Multiple Means of Engagement and Representation

Structure modules to allow students some choice in how they access content, giving them the flexibility to engage with materials in ways that best suit their individual learning preferences and interests. By offering a range of options, students can connect more deeply with the material, fostering curiosity and motivation. This approach encourages active participation, as students feel empowered to explore topics in ways that resonate with their strengths and needs, leading to a more meaningful and engaging learning. *See Quick Win 1*

Multiple Means of Action/Expression

Provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate their learning, incorporating both formative and summative assessments that allow flexibility and choice. This approach enables students to show their understanding through methods that align with their strengths and preferences, whether they're completing ongoing assessments that give feedback for improvement or final assessments that showcase their knowledge. Offering diverse options for expression encourages students to engage more deeply with the material, fosters confidence, and supports a range of skills, helping them take ownership of their learning journey. *See Quick Win 2*

Feedback Loops

When used through regular check-ins, feedback-loops have been shown to maintain and even increase student engagement. According to Carless (2006), feedback that is frequent, timely and responsive can improve students' sense of involvement and progression in the learning process. When teachers actively respond to feedback by adapting their instructional approaches, students feel their needs are being acknowledged, fostering a sense of belonging and motivation to engage further. *See Quick Win 3*

References

- Carless, D. (2006). Differing perceptions in the feedback process. *Studies in Higher Education*, 31(2), 219-233.
- Meyer, A., Rose, D. H., & Gordon, D. (2014). *Universal Design for Learning: Theory and Practice*. CAST Professional Publishing.
- Tobin, T. J., & Behling, K. (2018). *Reach Everyone, Teach Everyone: Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education*. West Virginia University Press.

Have you considered that some students don't see the relevance or value of some activities in terms of their future career?



→ **QW1. Use Active Methodologies** (e.g. project based learning (PBL), flipped learning, game-based learning (GBL) etc.) to promote students' soft skills and specify the link between the tasks and the development of skills. [Here](#) you can get some tips to implement active methodologies in HE.

→ **QW2. Promote the Use of Career Specific Software** related to the subject (e.g. modelling and design, programming, computing, etc.) and general ICT (e.g. AI, text editing, concept mapping etc.) and promote their use for out-of-class work.

→ **QW3. Organize Visits to Job-Related Centers in your Area of Expertise.** Bring professionals to class, who can explain what students need to know in their career. Or, even better, bring alumni to talk about it with students.

→ **QW4. Familiarise Students with your Institution's Internship programme,** (if you have one) and share information about previous internships related to the subject or to the course.

In relation to [expectations and organisation of studies](#), students need to align their own career representations with their university studies, and connect course content with the practical aspects of their professional life.

Promote Soft Skills

Soft skills, such as leadership, teamwork, socio-emotional competences, etc. are considered crucial in the labour market and a distinctive aspect for future career development. By enhancing these skills and linking them to the tasks students need to fulfil in a course, students connect more strongly with the practicality and relevance of these skills for their future careers. *See Quick Win 1*

Use ICT Relevant for the Job

Future employers will look for students with up-to-date IT skills. Therefore, the use of job-specific software and general ICT in university tasks helps students to connect their tasks at university with their future career. *See Quick Win 2*

Provide Real-World Experiences

Recognising the usefulness of course content usually relates to its real-world application. When students are able to relate their university tasks to a real-world experience their motivation is enhanced. Whenever possible, have students apply their in-class learning to real-world activities directly related to students' future career tasks. *See Quick Win 3*

Promote Internships Whenever Possible

Experiential learning has often proven beneficial for students in reinforcing theories and concepts, and in providing opportunities for students to apply their learning. Internships, prior to graduation, offer opportunities for students to experience real-world learning experiences. *See Quick Win 4*

Further information

- Burga, R., Leblanc, J., & Rezanian, D. (2020). Exploring student perceptions of their readiness for project work: utilizing social cognitive career theory. *Project Management Journal*, 51(2), 154-164. <https://doi.org/10.1177/8756972819896697>
- Galbraith, D., & Mondal, S. (2020). The Potential Power of Internships and the Impact on Career Preparation. *Research in Higher Education Journal*, 38.
- Lee, J., Spears, L., Ambapavaru, C. R., Ma, J., Hollister, J., Mardis, M., & McClure, C. (2014). *Aligning expectation and reality about IT career preparation: perception of job competencies by students, new professionals, and employers*. New Professionals, and Employers.
- Malhotra, R., Massoudi, M., & Jindal, R. (2023). An alumni-based collaborative model to strengthen academia and industry partnership: The current challenges and strengths. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(2), 2263-2289. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11276-1>
- Quinlan, K. M., & Renninger, K. A. (2022). Rethinking employability: how students build on interest in a subject to plan a career. *Higher Education*, 84(4), 863-883. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-021-00804-6>

Have you considered that some students may not have developed effective study habits and/or don't know how to manage their studying time?



→ **QW1. [Introduce Learning Journals](#)** to students and **[encourage their use](#)** for out-of-class work.

→ **QW2. Promote the Use of Time Management Techniques** such as [Pomodoro Technique](#), [Eisenhower Method](#) or Block Study Method and share the instructions for their purpose and use.

→ **QW3. Introduce Study Techniques** such as [Concept mapping](#) or effective note-taking like the [Cornell Note Taking System](#) or the [Zettelkasten Method](#).

In relation to their performance, students are [adjusting to a new studying environment](#) where they need to be more active and autonomous. Many students need to develop new learning and organisational strategies in order to work on their own, manage their time, and meet deadlines.

A poor level of self-management, self-leadership and time management skills

My students don't do the prescribed readings/homework or do it in a very poor/low quality manner | 99

may be a barrier to accomplishing university tasks. Here are some basic strategies that you can follow to foster students' autonomy and productivity.

Promote Self-Regulated Learning

Learning journals promote self-regulated learning (SRL) and develop metacognitive skills by making students reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned it. Students need to learn how to monitor their own progress over time and be able to identify areas for improvement. This way, significant learning is fostered. *See Quick Win 1*

Help Students Increase their Productivity

Several time management techniques may help students learn how to organize their studying and increase their productivity. For example, students can learn how to divide tasks into different sub-activities and how to schedule working-time and resting-time. *See Quick Win 2*

Some of these techniques are:

- **Pomodoro thecnique:** which suggest 25 minutes of studying and 5 minutes breaks.
- **Eisenhower Matrix (or urgent-important matrix):** Prioritization tool that helps organize tasks based on their urgency and importance.
- **Block Study Method:** time division in blocks dedicated to different topics, with the aim of focusing on each topic without interruption.

Teach Effective Study Techniques

Encouraging the use of study techniques that promote reflection and the organisation of ideas, helps students adapt to an autonomous study environment. *See Quick Win 3*

- **Concept mapping** helps students to organize their ideas, link new concepts to previous knowledge and address group tasks.
- **Effective note-taking** helps to remember relevant information and link it to previous knowledge, thus, improving students' performance in tasks

Further information

[Consult the theoretical elements that support these strategies here.](#)

Have you considered that out of class study conditions can impact students' ability to work effectively?



QUICK WINS

- **QW1. Let Students Know About Resources Available.** During the first class of the course, let them know about the faculty library, working areas available, how to borrow books or computers, etc.
- **QW2. Ask Students to Have a study schedule.** This is an [example of schedule](#) that can serve your students as inspiration to create their own
- **QW3. Offer Group Tutoring.** They can be voluntary and weekly. Try to make them active and to promote teamwork.

As noted in the literature review on [transition challenges](#), students may find it challenging to find institutional support structures, and to understand the importance of soft skills in creating connections with peers and academic staff.

Bring Study Spaces to the Fore

A poor study environment (poor light, layout etc.) can impact negatively on students' motivation to set aside the time needed to complete a task. Good space and resources are more likely to help students improve their focus and thus their academic performance. *See Quick Win 1*

Recognise the Need for Planning

First year students might struggle to find a dedicated out- of- class time where they can study in an organised manner. Lecturers can support students by offering them tips to improve their planning. For instance, just working outside home requires planning, and that encourages the students' daily/weekly work. *See Quick Win 2*

Praise the Advantages of Collaboration

Social isolation can discourage students from dedicating time to study. Collaborative strategies, such as peer-to-peer learning or attracting students to become part of learning communities, have the potential to foster human connections. Within these or other collaborative strategies, lecturers can support students by dedicating specific times where they can guide or supervise students. *See Quick Win 3*

Further information

- Interested in learning more about factors that make a good study environment? The study by LeGrow *et al.* (2023) entitled “Home Away from Home: How Undergraduate and Graduate Students Experience Space and Place in a new Health Sciences Building” discusses the influence of space and place on learning.
→ LeGrow, K., Espin S., Chui L., *et al.* (2023). Home Away from Home: How Undergraduate and Graduate Students Experience Space and Place in a new Health Sciences Building. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*. 55(4), 447-456.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/08445621231190581>
- Participation in learning communities proved to be positively linked to student engagement, self-reported outcomes, and satisfaction, with stronger effects for first-year students by the by study by Zhao and Kuh (2004).
→ Zhao, CM. & Kuh, G.D. (2004). Adding Value: Learning Communities and Student Engagement. *Research in Higher Education* 45, 115–138 <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:RIHE.0000015692.88534.de>

Getting ready for exams in higher education can be challenging, and students often need support to evaluate their skills and proficiencies. Educators recommend incorporating self-assessment tools such as quizzes, e-portfolios, journals, and rubrics into teaching practices to improve exam performance and promote self-awareness. These methods help students identify their learning preferences, study habits, and areas of weakness, empowering them to take ownership of their learning and seek appropriate support when needed.

About Self-assessment Tools

Preparing for exams in higher education can be demanding, and students often need help to assess their skills and competencies (Mohammed and Ahmed, 2023). Although self assessment is often viewed as a skill or ability, it involves more than just assigning oneself a grade. It is an important process that requires students to actively seek feedback from various sources, reflect on it, and evaluate their learning performance based on specific criteria. It should be acknowledged that students can conduct self assessments independently without seeking external feedback, and they may stop self-assessing once they make their initial judgment (BNKW *et al.*, 2023). Educators and instructors recommend incorporating self-assessment tools like the proposed tool in their teaching practice to improve student's exam performance and foster self-awareness of their strengths and weaknesses (Mohammed and Ahmed, 2023).

Mohammed and Ahmed (2023) present a self-assessment tool to improve students' exam preparation and performance. The study involved collecting data from students before and after using the tool, which asked questions related to exam preparation strategies such as understanding the exam format, imagining potential test questions, and following directions carefully. The results were compared to assess the tool's effectiveness in improving students' exam skills. The findings showed a significant improvement in the student's self-assessment and exam performance after using the tool.

Table 1: A few examples of ways to Implement Student Self-Assessment in Higher Education and the Benefits for Students (Papanthymou and Darra, 2018).

Researches (Year) Country	Implementation of Student Self-Assessment	Aim of the Study
Hung (2009), Taiwan	e- portfolio	Investigation of how foreign language students use self-assessment when they write in their e-portfolios.
Pournais (2009), Greece	Quiz (quiz report analysis for moodle)	Development of the Quiz Report Analysis to present the results of student self-assessment through Quiz module of Moodle.
Chen (2010), Taiwan	Web-based Mobile Assessment Participation system	Proposal of a web based system that can contribute to the effectiveness of peer-assessment.
Rivas & Arrufat (2016), Spain	Electronic rubrics for self and peer assessment	Investigation of the use of e-rubrics to assess learning.
Ozarslan & Ozan (2016), Turkey	Online self-assessment quiz taking behaviours	Investigation the student self-assessment quiz taking behaviours in an online course.
Duque Micán & Cuesta Medina (2017), Colombia	Systematic cycle where self-assessment is applied as a formative assessment source	Investigation of the effect of self-assessment on vocabulary ability students' oral fluency.
Fraile, Panadero, & Pardo (2017), Spain	Co-creating rubrics (students take part in the creation of rubrics)	Comparison between the influence of co-creating rubrics and use of rubrics without the process of co-creating.
Elgadal (2017), Libya	Self-assessment sheet, post-study feedback form	Investigation of the effect of self-assessment on the writing of EFL students.

In summary, self-assessment tools for students serve multiple purposes, including increasing the interest and motivation level of students for the subjects leading to enhanced learning and better academic performance (Sharma *et al.*, 2016), improving exam preparation and performance (Mohammed and Ahmed, 2023), assessing knowledge and teaching lifelong learning skills (Mehta, 1999), engaging students in their learning (Dungan, 2006) and developing self-evaluation skills for lifelong learning and professional practice (Arthur, 1995).

References

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Online Resources

- Digital tools that teachers can use to make self-assessment tools: [SurveyMonkey](#), [H5P Branching scenario](#), [Padlet](#)

Although both universities and high schools are educational institutions, their differences can often make the transition between them challenging for students. This transition is further complicated by the fact that students moving from high school to university are typically teenagers navigating the development of their new adult identity (Brunton & Buckley, 2021).

Additional challenges include the need for some students to relocate to another city or country to pursue their studies, while others may take on part-time jobs to fund their education. These factors can intensify the difficulties of transitioning, both personally and socially.

The differences between high school and university have been extensively explored in the literature and include the following:

- Differences in terms of academic work (Pownall *et al.*, 2022; Thompson *et al.* 2021; Charalambous, 2020; Pennington *et al.*, 2018)
- Differences in the rhythm and amount of work (Cameron et Rideout, 2022; Trautwein & Bosse, 2017)
- Differences in university rituals (Zibanejad-Belin, 2019; Taylor & Harris-Evans, 2018)
- Differences in what is made explicit and what is not in terms of teachers' expectations (Bournaud & Pamphile, 2021; Thompson *et al.*, 2021; Knoesen & Naudé, 2018)
- Differences in communication codes (Pollard & Bamford, 2022; Gill, 2021)

The expectations for students at high school differ significantly from those at university, and the literature identifies certain areas that students may find particularly challenging, including the following:

- **Time Management:** In high school, the time between organising and submitting prescribed work is typically much shorter, and teachers often remind students of due dates, allowing them to plan accordingly. At university, however, students are expected to organise and plan their work independently and meet deadlines autonomously (De Clercq *et al.*, 2018).
- **Socialisation:** At university, students face the challenge of developing and expanding their social networks. They must integrate into a much larger and more diverse community than they were accustomed to in

high school (Amundsen, 2022; Willem et al., 2022; Gill, 2021; van Herpen et al., 2020; De Coninck et al., 2019).

- **Sustaining Career Orientation:** Some students may invest considerable time and energy in questioning or reaffirming their career goals (Trautwein & Bosse, 2017; Bloch & Ghedamsi, 2006).
- **Maintaining Learning Motivation:** High school teachers often provide regular encouragement and specially designed activities to engage students. By contrast, some university instructors may not view motivating students or designing engaging activities as part of their role.
- **Study Methods:** University students are frequently required to adopt new study strategies, including taking notes at a faster pace, reading large volumes of material, and working collaboratively. Adapting to these demands can take time for some students.

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Boud and Molloy (2012) describe feedback as a process through which the learner obtains information about their work to identify similarities and differences between the standards for the task and the qualities of their own work, enabling them to produce higher-quality outcomes. This definition highlights three key points:

1. Feedback is seen as a process and not simply as information received.
2. The learner's role in seeking information is emphasised, implying that receiving feedback is not passive.
3. Feedback is not merely information about performance; it also serves as a tool for improvement in subsequent similar or more complex tasks.

Traditional feedback, often consisting of written or verbal comments on student's assigned tasks, has long been beneficial for both university students and their instructors. However, it comes with certain limitations alongside its advantages:

- Feedback is commonly provided on coursework assignments but rarely on crucial end-of-semester or end-of-year exams, which significantly impact overall grades (Hounsell *et al.*, 2007).
- Teachers' feedback typically centers on whether a student's work meets specific criteria and standards, but for students whose submissions fall short, these comments may not directly illustrate what exemplary work entails. Yet, understanding what constitutes excellent work is vital for interpreting and applying feedback effectively (Sadler, 1989).
- Feedback in higher education usually occurs after the completion of the assessed work, which can be unsettling for first-year students accustomed to ongoing support throughout the assignment process in previous educational settings (Beaumont *et al.*, 2011).

Formative Feedback

Formative feedback represents information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify the learner's thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning. Information within the feedback may address the accuracy of a response to a problem or task and may additionally touch on particular errors and misconceptions, with the latter representing more specific or elaborated types of feedback (Azevedo & Bernard, 1995; Birenbaum &

Tatsuoka, 1987; Cheng, Lin, Chen, & Heh, 2005; Cohen, 1985; Kulhavy, 1977; Sales, 1993; Sleeman, Kelly, Martinak, Ward, & Moore, 1989).

To be effective, formative feedback should permit the comparison of actual performance with some established standard of performance (Johnson & Johnson, 1993). The definition of formative feedback may be further refined as multidimensional, non-evaluative, supportive, learner-controlled, timely, specific, credible, infrequent, contingent, and genuine (e.g., Brophy, 1981; Schwartz & White, 2000).

Collective Feedback

Collective feedback offers a practical solution for situations where academics lack the time to provide one-on-one feedback, such as when managing large groups of students or facing time constraints. This method is often used to provide more detailed and elaborate comments, for example, by addressing common misconceptions, comparing or discussing alternative approaches, or reviewing exemplary and less effective examples.

One major advantage of collective feedback is that students can learn from their peers' work, gaining a broader perspective on what is expected. This approach encourages students to critically compare their work to others, ultimately helping them develop the ability to provide constructive self-feedback. For some students, comparing their work with that of peers may initially feel challenging, but group feedback is generally perceived as less intimidating than individual feedback.

However, a disadvantage of collective feedback is that it does not address individual mistakes or questions, making it less tailored to each student's needs. As a result, many students prefer one-on-one feedback. Nevertheless, the overarching goal of education is to equip students with the skills to work independently, develop self-critical abilities, and learn to effectively respond to feedback from both experts and peers.

Exemplars, Model Answers and Past Questions

Sadler (1989) contended that for students to effectively use feedback, they

must possess a solid understanding of what qualifies as outstanding work within a subject, at a specific academic level.

As defined by Huxham (2007), a model answer is an ideal, tutor-generated response to a question that would receive 100% of the marks, and which is made available to all of the students involved in an assessment. Model answers are usually crafted by teachers. Huxham sees various advantages in model answers:

- They can be given much more quickly than individual comments
- They do not involve personal comments from the teacher (avoiding dangers of negative feedback)
- They require some active engagement of the student who needs to read his/her work and to compare it with the model answer given
- They can be explicitly linked to marking criteria and learning objectives.

Huxham (2007) suggests that model answers are most effective when paired with individual feedback comments.

Unlike model answers, exemplars are genuine examples of students' work that demonstrate what peers can realistically achieve rather than presenting an unattainable standard of perfection. According to Sadler (2002), exemplars convey messages that other methods cannot, as they not only tell students what constitutes excellence but also show them. Furthermore, exemplars are typically diverse, offering a range of examples that illustrate high-quality work. This variety helps address concerns from teachers that providing only a single model answer or exemplar of excellence might encourage mindless imitation rather than thoughtful emulation (Hounsell, 2008).

Handley and Williams (2009) found that students are highly receptive to exemplars.

Feedforward Feedback

Feedback, including examples, is often provided after an exam or after an assignment has been submitted. However, it can also be offered before an activity, a process known as "feedforward."

In undergraduate education, feedback is typically retrospective and indirectly

linked to future actions. Assignments and assessments are often concentrated toward the end of semesters, making it difficult for students to determine when and where feedback can be effectively applied. As a result, even high-quality feedback may have a limited impact. By contrast, postgraduate research supervision frequently involves ongoing feedback on drafts, such as research designs, analyses of emerging findings, or developing thesis chapters. These iterative comments directly shape refinements and revisions, creating a “feedforward” effect.

To address the limitations of retrospective feedback, some undergraduate courses have implemented “feedforward assignments” that establish a clear connection between diagnosis and remedial action. These assignments typically involve a recursive “feedback loop,” where students submit a draft, receive comments, revise their work, and resubmit it. Drafts can take various forms, including complete or nearly complete assignments, initial outlines or plans, extended summaries, or opening pages.

Feedforward assignments offer students the benefit of low-stakes practice on assessable work while providing actionable feedback to enhance subsequent formal assessments. However, these assignments may require earlier deadlines, which can be challenging for students managing other commitments. To address this, participation is often optional rather than mandatory. For instance, in two examples of feedforward assignments, approximately half of the students opted to submit drafts for feedback (Covic and Jones, 2008; Prowse *et al.*, 2007).

Online Feedback

Another way of giving feedback can include the use of technology such as online feedback. Online feedback is immediate, and can be accessed by students at the time of their choosing. While the main type of question used tends to be multiple choice, it is also possible to design short-answer questions (Jordan & Mitchell, 2009).

Rubrics

A rubric is a structured tool that outlines the criteria for assessing an assignment or task, often with specific levels of performance described for each

criterion. Assessment and feedback pro formas, often referred to as “cover sheets” or “assignment attachments,” are widely used to provide structured and standardised feedback to students (Hounsell et al., 2007). These tools, commonly in the form of rubrics, offer several key benefits:

- **Alignment with Assessment Criteria:** Rubrics link feedback directly to assessment criteria, helping markers maintain focus and ensure consistent evaluation across multiple assignments. Students benefit by clearly understanding how comments and ratings correspond to the criteria.
- **Consistency Across Course Teams:** When all markers use the same rubric, consistency in marking and feedback is improved, ensuring fairness and uniformity across the course.
- **Balanced Feedback:** Combining ratings and written comments allows markers to provide feedback that is both comprehensive and concise, balancing breadth with depth.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Rubrics enable students and teachers to track progress over time by identifying strengths and areas for improvement across a series of assignments, facilitating targeted efforts to address gaps.

Rubrics not only streamline the feedback process for educators but also enhance students’ ability to interpret and apply feedback effectively, promoting continuous learning and improvement.

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While writing norms are different according to the university cultural context (power distance: institutional hierarchy or more egalitarian communication, e.g. use of titles), Stephens et al. (2009) reveal that an overly casual message, a lack of salutation and unconventional spelling compromised the student's credibility and the lecturer's willingness to answer the request. The following hints can be useful for establishing a clear student-teacher communication.

Learner-Centered Syllabi

Learner-centered syllabus might be a helpful way of establishing clear, but kind, boundaries. You can read an article on it [here](#) or [here](#). The creation of an [interactive syllabus](#) can be helpful to ensure that students are made familiar with the expectations of the instructor in an active way.

Being a "Warm Demander"

From the mid 1970's, Judith Kleinfeld, coined the term of 'warm demander' and it has been written about in educational literature since then. [This web article](#) is a good introduction to the topic that offers some useful references at the end. 'Warm demander' has also been used by [Michelle Pacansky-Brock](#) who coined the term "Humanization". You can consult a [50 minute session](#) recording that she gave on the topic and a [shorter video example](#) (3 minutes) from Michelle; in one of these she addresses assignment due dates in a 'warm demander' way.

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Create Anonymous Communication Channels

- [Students may benefit from anonymous back-channel communications](#)
- [Encourage students to ask for, and accept, help](#)

Implement Icebreakers

- You can find some additional examples of university appropriate icebreakers [here](#) and [here](#).

Use Gamification

- [Implementing Gamification](#)
- [4 Strategies to Harness Gamification to “Hack” Student Engagement](#)
- Learn more about the effects of gamification on cognitive, motivational, and behavioural learning outcomes in this meta-analysis:
→ Sailer, M., & Homner, L. (2020). The gamification of learning: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 32(1), 77-112

Create a Supporting Classroom Culture

- [5 Tips for Teaching Students How to Ask for Help](#)
- This article from Kirby & Thomas (2021) emphasises the importance of caring and supportive teacher behaviour in enhancing classroom-level belonging which, in turn, contributes to student success and well-being.
→ Kirby, L. A. J., & Thomas, C. L. (2021). High-impact teaching practices foster a greater sense of belonging in the college classroom. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 46(3), 368–381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1950659>

- **Student participation**, according to Rocca (2010), can be defined as a combination of asking questions, raising one's hand, and commenting in class. Rocca goes on to state that eye contact and smiling demonstrate support to students.

→ Rocca, K. A. (2010). Student participation in the college classroom: An extended multidisciplinary literature review. *Communication Education*, 59(2), 185-213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520903505936>.
- Brown & Pruis, as early as in 1958, explored the idea of **getting students talk in class**. They asked the question: "What can we do to make the discussion of the average classroom more interesting and useful?". They had already identified this as a real problem with first-year university students. In addition, they explored the question of why students do not participate in class, with the following findings:
 - Fear of interrupting
 - Fear of language deficiency
 - Fear of non-fluency
 - Fear of not making sense to others
 - Fear of intellectual superiority
 - Fear of making some kind of mistake

The authors suggest a variety of class strategies that can help alleviate students' fears.

- Brown, C. T., & Pruis, J. J. (1958). Encouraging participation in classroom discussion. *The Speech Trainer*, 7(4), 344-346, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634525809376980>.
- In the context of the United States, the next study revealed how cold-calling resulted in a significant **increase in the number of students answering questions voluntarily in class**, participation which increased over time. When asking questions, give all students time to think and prepare their answer, then call on any student to respond (Dallimore et al., 2013).

→ Dallimore, E. J., Hertenstein, J. H., & Platt, M. B. (2013). Impact of cold-calling on student voluntary participation. *Journal of Management Education*, 37(3), 305-341. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562912446067>.
- In her review of previous studies about student participation in the class-

room, Rocca covers 51 years of research in this field (1958-2009) and overviews elements such as the **benefits of participation and the instructor's influence on it**:

- Rocca, K. A. (2010). Student participation in the college classroom: An extended multidisciplinary literature review. *Communication Education*, 59(2), 185-213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634520903505936>.
- Professor Abrahams shares many useful **techniques** in his book “**Speaking Up without Freaking Out: 50 Techniques for Confident and Compelling Presenting**”.
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- The book **Non-Violent Communication: A Language of life**, is a key resource for creating safe learning environments.
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- Reflective writing assignments can also **promote students' reflection on their participation**. An example can be found in: <https://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/assessmentfeedback/keyassessmenttypes/reflective-assignment/>.
- Students could find a **Toastmasters' Club** through the website: Toastmasters International. (n.d.). Find a Club. <https://www.toastmasters.org/find-a-club>.
- More information about **how to ensure a safe, inclusive classroom environment** can be found here: <https://digitalstrategy.unt.edu/clear/teaching-resources/theory-practice/inclusive-instructional-strategies.html>

Instructional Clarity

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Jargon Buster

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Assessment Clarity

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Learning Journals and Self-Regulated Learning

- Araka, E., Maina, E., Gitonga, R. & Oboko, R. (2020). Research trends in measurement and intervention tools for self-regulated learning for e-learning environments—systematic review (2008–2018). *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning*, 15(1), 6. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-020-00129-5>
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This article discusses the use of blogs as an educational tool, specifically focusing on their application as learning journals for students. The research explores how blogging technology can support various educational objectives such as student communication, content delivery, mentoring, professional development, collaboration, and knowledge management. The study, which involved students from three learning contexts creating online journals, found positive outcomes in terms of learning documentation, study habits, structured thinking, and the transformation of information into meaningful knowledge. This supports the use of blogs as effective e-learning spaces, adding a new dimension to online educational practices.

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This article presents findings on how journal writing, as a reflective tool, aided university students in contemplating and integrating their external experiences with course content. The study highlights the importance of reflection in the decision-making processes educators face daily and suggests journal writing as an effective method to augment this reflective practice.

Time Management Techniques and Online Tools

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Study Techniques

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Create a Peer Mentoring Program

- See this [study](#) by Skaniakos et al. (2019), for positive impact of clear study guidance.
 - Skaniakos, T., Honkimäki, S., Kallio, E., Nissinen, K., & Tynjälä, P. (2018). Study guidance experiences, study progress, and perceived learning outcomes of Finnish university students. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 9(2), 203–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2018.1475247>
- In this report by Andrews & Clark (2011), you can learn more about how to set up a peer mentoring programme and the benefits it offers.
 - Andrews, J., & Clark, R. (2011). *Peer Mentoring Works!* Aston University. Available at this [page](#).
- You can also check out this study by Smith and Burton (2013) to learn more specifically about the impact of online peer mentoring on the transition.
 - Smith, H. and Burton, L. (2013). The impact of online peer mentoring on first year student transition, problem solving skills, and academic success. Proceedings of the 16th International First Year in Higher Education Conference (FYHE 2013). Wellington, New Zealand, Brisbane, Australia.

Use Premade Documents, FAQ Questions or Existing University Brochures

- This article by Tomuro & Lytinen, 2004 explores some ideas on how to use new techniques for creating FAQ documents.
 - Tomuro, N., & Lytinen, S.L. (2004). Retrieval Models and Q and A Learning with FAQ Files. In Maybury, M.T. (Ed.). *New Directions in Question Answering*. American Association of Artificial Intelligence (AAAI). Available at this [page](#).

Prepare a Template for Students to Ask for Support

- Learn more about the benefits of using automatic email reminders [here](#).
- See this study by Schwebel et al, 2008 on the benefits of frequently reminding first-year students of their advising appointments.

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Collaborative Learning Activities

- Lu, H. S. & Smiles, R.V. (2022). The Role of Collaborative Learning in the Online Education. *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research*. 6,6, 97-106. [doi: 10.51505/ijebmr.2022.6608](https://doi.org/10.51505/ijebmr.2022.6608)

Formative Assessment Activities

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The following list is a recapitulatif of all the resources that have been cited in this hanbook. They are organised by global topics to facilitate its consultation.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

- [Predict, Observe, Explain \(POE\)](#) (Online article)
- [Storytelling in Classroom](#) (Online article with video)
- [Active Learning Teaching Guide](#) (Online article)
- [Designing a Flipped Class Lesson](#) (Video)
- [Learning Journal Definition and Use](#) (Pdf document)
- Peer Instruction
 - [Peer Instruction definition and activities](#) (Webstite)
 - [Eric Mazur explains Peer Instruction](#) (Video)
 - [Effective Teaching in Large STEM Classes](#) (Ebook)
- Think Pair-Share
 - [Thik-Pair-Share Strategie Definition and References](#) (Pdf document)
 - [Help Students Test New Ideas by Using Think-Pair-Share](#) (Pdf document)
 - [Tips for Implementing Think-Pair-Share](#) (Pdf document)
 - [Think-Pair-Share Online and Offline](#) (Online article)
- Gamification
 - [Implementing Gamification](#) (Online article)
 - [4 Strategies to Harness Gamification to “Hack” Student Engagement](#) (Online article)

Study Methods and Tools

- [Concept Mapping Tools](#) (Online article)
- [The Cornell Note Taking System](#) (Online article and videos)
- [The Zettelkasten Method](#) (Website)
- Active reading
 - [Active reading, Critical Reading Techniques](#) (Online article)
 - [Active-Reading Strategies for University Students](#) (Online article)
 - [Active Reading: Five Ways to Engage Students in their Reading](#) (Online article)

Time Management and Organisation

- [How is a due date like a bull's eye?](#) (Video)
- [Pomodoro technique Presentation](#) (Pdf document)
- [Eisenhower Matrix Presentation](#) (Pdf document)
- [Example a Weekly Study Schedule](#) (Pdf document)
- [Weekly Organisation Format](#) (Document)
- [Task Priorisation Using an Online Board Tool](#) (Online article)
- [Goal Setting Sessions Following the SMART Model](#) (Pdf document)

Communication

- [Toastmasters Public Speaking Club](#) (Website)
- [Basic Guide to Mail a Teacher](#) (Pdf document)
- [Non-Violent Communication Model](#) (Pdf document)
- Effective Questionning
 - [Kit for Asking Effective Questions](#) (Article)
 - [Questioning approaches](#) (Pdf document)

Creating a Safe Environment

- [Taking in Consideration A Cognitive Bias When Teaching](#) (Online article)
- [Why and How to Humanize your Online Class](#) (Infographic)
- [Rigor through Empathy: Becoming a Warm Demander](#) (Video)
- [Inclusive Instructional Strategies](#) (Online article)
- Setting Class Expectations
 - [Setting Class Expectation for your Students](#) (Online article)
 - [Setting Expectations](#) (Online article)
 - [Creating an Interactive syllabi](#) (Website)
 - [Example of a Mindmap Syllabus](#) (Interactive online graphic)
 - [Sample Classroom or Group Norms](#) (Pdf document)
 - [Create a FAQ document](#) (Online article)
- Icebreakers
 - [Two Truths and a Lie](#) (Online article)
 - [Human Bingo Description](#) (Online article)
 - [Speed meeting. A First Day Activity for the Classroom](#) (Online article)

- [25 Classroom Icebreakers for College Professors](#) (Online article)
- [Building Community in the Classroom Through Icebreakers and Parting Ways](#) (Pdf document)
- [60 Awesome Icebreakers for Orientation and Beyond](#) (Online article)

Frameworks and Tools to Design Activities

- [The Conversational Framework](#) (Video)
- [TeachEUR – Already Available Activities](#) (Website)
- [PZ's Thinking Routines Toolbox](#) (Website)
- [Liberating Structures](#) (Website)
- [Branching Scenario Tutorial](#) (Online article)

University Culture and High School Culture

- [The Challenges Game](#) (Document)
- [High-school and University Comparative Table](#) (Document)
- [The Myths and Realities Game](#) (Document)

Information Gathering

- [KWL Method Table \(What I Know, What I Want to Know, and What I Learned\)](#) (Document)
- [Fillable Table to Provide Students with Basic Information](#) (Document)

Feedback

- [Feedback for Learning Guide](#) (Online article)
- [Handout: Clarifying and Probing Questions](#) (Pdf document)
- [Feedback Codes Example](#) (Image)
- [Feedback templates](#) (Pdf document)
- [Template Action Plan for Integrating Feedback](#) (Pdf document)
- [Reinventing Feedback Sandwich](#) (Website)
- [Bumper and micro-lectures of a specific topic](#) (Online article and videos)
- Rubrics
 - [Rubric's example 1](#) (Pdf document)

- [Rubric's example 2](#)(Pdf document)
- [Rubric's example 3](#)(Pdf document)
- [Rubric Best Practices, Examples and Templates](#) (Online article)
- [Rubrics](#) (Online article)
- [Oral Presentation Rubric](#) (Pdf document)
- [Example of a rubric for 'Have you considered that what is expected from students might not be clear?'](#) (Pdf document)

Assessment

- [Weekly Check-in Questions](#) (Document)
- [Letter of Recommendation Tips](#) (Online article)
- Self-assessment
 - [Self-Assessment Tool: Questionnaire to Determine Academic Engagement](#) (Document)
 - [Reflective Assignments](#) (Online article)