

Create an Online Introduction Activity

Research in online pedagogy suggests that a supportive, collaborative relationship among online learners is a critical component of effective online learning (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Conrad & Donaldson, 2011). Starting from the first week of the course, instructors should create opportunities to help learners get to know each other through interactive online activities. These types of nonthreatening, ungraded activities will help them become more comfortable with each other, as well as with the online learning environment. Investing the time up front to focus on community building can have a lasting impact on the overall success of the course (Palloff & Pratt, 2007).

Below is an introduction activity to help instructors get to know their students and students get to know each other.

In small or medium size classes (10-25 students), you may want to post a brief welcome message to each student as they post. This acknowledgement will make them feel ‘seen’ and help you establish an initial connection with them.

<p>Activity Title: Top 5 Recommendations</p> <p>Objective: Meeting each other, sharing interests, and finding commonalities and differences among learners in the course.</p>	<p>INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS: In the introductions discussion forum, post</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your preferred name; • year in school; • your major(s)/minor; and • a picture of yourself and/or other people, places, things that are important to you. <p>Then, provide a list of your top five recommendations of things to do, see, and/or eat that you would give to someone visiting your campus town or your home town for the first time.</p> <p>After you have posted, read through all of your peers’ posts and reply to at least two people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one person with whom you have a shared or similar recommendation and • one person who shared something new to you that you would like to try.
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