

Creating a Supportive Environment in Your Large Class

Many educators struggle to connect with their students in large course sections. To create a more supportive environment in larger course sections:

- Greet students as they enter the classroom (Davis, 1993).
- Have students state their names when asking a question, and refer to their names in your response. The effect of this personal address carries over to all students (Benjamin, 1991).
- At the beginning of each class session, ask 6 to 8 students to introduce themselves (McGlynn, 2001; Ricci, 2004; Smith & Malex, 1995).
- During the first day of class, have students introduce themselves to one or two of their neighboring students.
- Put a list of students on the board, and ask these students to sit in the front row. Change this list each class session so that all students sit in the front row a couple of times during the semester. Before formally beginning class, talk informally to the students who sit in the front row about homework or other coursework, or answer general questions they may have about your class materials (Wheeler, 2000).
- Occasionally attend a lab or a discussion session to answer students' questions.