



THE PERSISTENCE PROJECT

Center for Teaching Excellence

Goal—To cultivate a campus culture that encourages and values the use of evidence-based pedagogical practices that support student learning and belonging

Participant Commitment—By signing on to the project, faculty commit to:

- Integrating 4 activities within a single course during the first 4 weeks of the semester
- Completing a pre- and post-assessment to help the CTE measure results

Persistence Project Required Activities—*see below for more details and strategies*

1. **Communicate your belief that all students can succeed in your class**
2. **Learn and use students' names and have students learn each other's names**
3. **Give formative, success-oriented feedback on an assignment or quiz**
4. **Get to know your students**

Activity 1: Communicate your belief that all students can succeed in your class

Set clear, high academic standards, but not policies that easily doom students; send a clear message that there is support available for students who struggle.

How do I do it?

- Include language on the syllabus that every student has the potential to succeed in your class.
- Throughout the course, verbally reinforce that every student can succeed, especially before challenging assignments or tests.
- Consider policies like flexible deadlines, no harsh penalties for minor issues, etc.
- Use the Course Introduction section on the Canvas template to set expectations and clearly outline class policies.

Activity 2: Learn and use students' names and have students learn each other's names.

Using students' names and having them learn each other's names, creates an atmosphere in which students feel more comfortable interacting and shows your students you care about them as individuals.

How do I do it?

- Use name tents—research has shown that having students make and use name tents is correlated to significant positive results on student learning and motivation.
- Annotate your class roster with 1-2 prominent physical characteristics or facts about each student, perhaps those shared in an opening icebreaker.
- [This Faculty Focus article](#) includes ideas for helping students learn and use each other's names.
- Encourage students to set up their profile in Canvas; request that students add a profile picture and short biography including their majors and interests.
- Encourage students to [record their names in NameCoach](#), so you and the other students can hear the correct pronunciation.

Activity 3: Give formative, success-oriented feedback on an assignment or quiz.

Choose one of these options (we recommend using the same strategy for all students):

1. Give written/recorded feedback on an assignment or quiz, OR
2. Meet with students to share feedback on an assignment or quiz

How do I do it?

- Canvas offers robust tools, such as the Media comment feature, to provide recorded audio or video feedback, in addition to traditional written feedback.
 - Consider “revise and resubmit” options for students to improve their initial work.
 - Students can respond to comments on assignments, and you can request that students reply to feedback on assignments.
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Activity 4: Get to know your students.

Choose one of these options (we recommend using the same strategy for all students):

1. Hold a 15-minute “get-to-know-you” conference with every student, OR
2. Have students complete a non-graded “get-to-know-you” activity in or after the first-class

How do I do it?

- For either activity, explain (on the syllabus or in-person) that you want to get to know your students and begin to build classroom community.
- **Conference**—use this meeting to learn more about your students, both academically and personally; to reiterate that the student has the ability to be successful; and to share campus resources to support them.
 - Consider meeting with students outside your office, in a space where students are more comfortable (e.g. residence halls or Gallagher).
 - Ask the same 2-3 questions of every student, and use follow-up questions as appropriate. “How can I help you be successful?” is an effective question to ask every student.
- **Activity/assignment**—reassure students that only the instructor will see their final product.
 - “Where I’m From” poem—share the [poem by George Ella Lyon](#) and ask students to complete their own using the template or create a photo collage based on the prompts.
 - “This I Believe” ([guidelines](#))—assign to students as an essay or video/audio assignment
 - We recommend writing your own version and letting students know; if you feel comfortable, you could share your version in Canvas where all students can see it.
 - Both of these activities can be added to your Canvas course from Canvas Commons.
- Consider pairing this activity with the [first-day info sheet](#) or similar to gather information about students’ mindsets and emotions and to set and communicate the classroom climate.
- You can learn basic facts about your students, such as if they are first gen, commuter, veteran, etc., in the “Professor Home” section in EAB; contact Stephanie Daniels (danielss3@xavier.edu) if you need help with this function.
- Consider giving students credit toward final grade for attending meeting or completing assignment; you might also meet with students during class.
- Use information gleaned from this activity to emphasize topics and themes that particularly interest students.