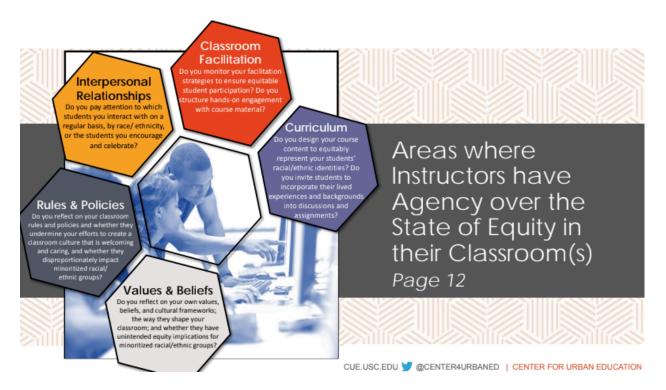# How to Know and Intervene for Our Online Students

Our agency to increase access and equity

Curriculum

- Window texts and mirror texts
- Student generated texts
  - Op-ed
    - Rhet analysis of op-ed
  - A Letter
    - Rhet analysis of letter
- Students find and introduce the texts

- Start with students and have on hand the model text on a back burner
- Teach concepts more than content
  - What is patriotism?

Classroom

- Rates of student participation
- Student grouping
- Discussions that set students up to play with language and ideas
- Set yourself up as the object or the foil
- Whole class workshops
- Reflective assignments that give the student a chance to process (vent or celebrate) and give the instructor a window into student experiences
- Make sure end goals are clear and foregrounding
- Break students in to small groups

Interpersonal relationship

- Consistency of teacher and student interactions
- Writing Journals
- Process writing
-

Rules and Policies

- Manage welcoming environment
- Accountability that promotes preparedness

Values and Beliefs

- Cultural frameworks
- Validating frustrations with cognitive dissonance and liminality; acknowledge awkwardness of developing discourses

How we identify, track, and actively get to know our online students by name, personality, and circumstance

curry

	Name	Confident/ "Busy/Worried/Reach-out	Reach out Week 1	Featured	Discussion Responses				
1	Dent, Stewart (Stew)	Short responses/Works fulltime	Zoom Meeting	Week 2	IIII				
			I'd like to hear a bit more about you						
2	Urner, Elizabeth (Lee)	Seasoned Online / Avoided ENGL		Week 4	IIIIIIII				

Jason

[4-week check-ins](#)

Sonia

The Weekly Announcement that features recurring topics and student work

Ask for student experiences with discussion topics
Documenting discourse development; call attention to and validate the emotional experiences
Consider the sequences of concepts and assignments; position content and concepts

How we intervene for specific student groups and individuals

When should we impose our values in way that interrupts those of our students?

Use inclusive language

How we support a specific student this semester

What about the student who has framed the online experience valuing individualism?

Allow assignments to be retaken *and* encourage forward

Jason Williams

How do you get to know 150 unique people in a week or so if you never meet them? Right. Just one of the challenges particular to distance education. It's a challenge on the ground, too, but at least in person we can use all of that biology that's evolved specifically to get to know people. Online, it's kind of like trying to taste the picture of the apple on your screen.

For the names part of the equation, I really just use basic repetition and really encourage them to use an identifying image that's unique to them, whether or not it's a photograph (though most use a photo). Canvas is pretty helpful with this in that the student's image appears with every contribution they make and communication they engage in. On my end, I just make sure I'm typing their name and associating it with their image and their work at every opportunity. Typing this, it seems crushingly obvious, but I just received updated best practices guidelines from another college, and they were really stressing using student names because it wasn't happening. On reflection, I can see where in the past I have dashed off e-mails or quick bits of feedback without addressing it to the student by name, but now I'm pretty consistent, and that helps me to get to know them.

Getting to know students by personality and circumstance requires creating opportunities to do this. On the ground, there's a certain amount of personality that can be understood quite quickly when any two people share space. Online, we only share made up space, which means we have to make up the chance to get to know people. While I am waiting to recognize my students through the uniqueness of their writing, I have been employing three opportunities to get to know them. I have a pretty typical first week forum where I encourage them to post about themselves some basic biographical data, and then also encourage them to update their Canvas profile with an image of their choosing. Nothing terribly inventive here, but it's a good way to start community building and to begin to get to know them. I post about myself here, too, but I mostly let them respond to one another in this space. At the end of the first week I send every student an individual e-mail introducing myself again, checking in on their progress getting familiar with the CMS, and asking them if they have any special requests/needs/concerns going into the class and how best I can support their learning. I also ask if there is anything else they want me to know about them. I respond to all of the responses I get to this e-mail. Typically, I get a pretty useful, pretty friendly, and pretty candid dialogue going with most of the students.

I repeat this at the end of the fourth week and include a brief overview of how they are doing in the course so far, some specific suggestions, and typically offer an opportunity to make up a missed assignment or quiz if it seems like this will help the student get back on track. I respond to all of the responses I receive here, as well. I'll do this again at eight and twelve weeks.

So, I am between the fourth week letter and the eighth week letter, and I am feeling pretty good about knowing my students, and I can see that they are pretty open in communicating with me, which has created a lot of contact, which I believe is the essential ingredient for successful online learning. One student in particular who I can see benefitting from this process is a single mother who works wildly varying shifts on a full time schedule. She is taking classes to find a more stable job and set a good example for her kids. Time is her great challenge. There is no way she could take a traditional course. However, I believe that would be her preference. As a returning student, the online learning environment is weird for her. I think she sees the potential of it, and the necessity of it for her situation, but I get the impression that when she signs in, everything and nothing in the course is happening at the same time. When I reached out to her during the first week, she seemed relieved to find that there was someone out there. We have had a few good exchanges, and she hasn't hesitated to get at me with even small questions about the assignments and navigating the course. She thought she was the only one who didn't get the online learning environment. She took advantage of the opportunity to make up two quizzes at the four-week check in, which she had been obsessing over having missed because her book hadn't arrived on time. Seeing the low grade every time she signed in had come to dominate her online experience in the course.