

During the Orientation/First Week

Your goal during the orientation stage (and the first week) is to prevent and/or eliminate student frustration and anxiety by helping them understand your expectations, orient themselves to course activities, connect them to you and their peers, and identify resources and tools they need for success. Remember to keep the first items focused on orientation rather than content. Establishing positive tones and patterns of communication is essential.

Time spent in the semester's beginning on course culture and organization pays huge dividends later when students can effectively stay focused on content.



Check off listed items below as you complete each during your first week of class

- ☐ Establish instructor presence. Reach out to students, welcoming them and introducing yourself to set a friendly, supportive and positive tone
- ☐ Host a virtual orientation session for students to attend and ask questions as you cover the information in this checklist. Record the session, and require all students to attend or watch the recording during the first week.
- ☐ Facilitate a scavenger hunt or similar assignment to have students explore the major course documents and syllabus, challenging them to think deeply about the upcoming content, redirecting students if needed
- ☐ Communicate with students daily to maintain a positive rapport and proactively contacts missing students to encourage their participation
- ☐ Respond to each student's introduction posting in the forum, building connections to their peers and the content when possible
- ☐ Revisit from the orientation your desired discussion response behavior, tone and response frequency. Continue to use conversational tone for responses that is inviting, personal, friendly, and encouraging
- ☐ Provide support information when needed, e.g., how to get remote access to the library, register for credit/no credit, drop the course, or use publisher's study materials as well as general student resources for learning
- ☐ Provide information about required text and other materials – including where they can be obtained if they haven't gotten them already
- ☐ Review the scheduling of your course, such as your weeks running from Sunday to Sunday, about how much time they should plan to spend each week, and the time of day the assignments are due, e.g., first discussion posts due Wednesday by midnight
- ☐ Explain your expectations of students if/when they encounter an issue when completing assignments or discussions
- ☐ Review your netiquette policy for online communication as well as your turnaround time for emails, discussion forums, and assessment
- ☐ Review assignments and how assignments will be submitted; e.g., how to submit a document using the LMS tool.
- ☐ Review the grading scale of class assignments, quizzes, exams, etc... including any policies or procedures such as bringing an ID to the testing center