

# CULTIVATING CONNECTION

## THREE WAYS IN-PERSON

- 1 STRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING:** Create intentional opportunities for students to share beyond the course material. Take 5 minutes at the beginning of class to connect around a prompt that is fun or learning related, “what song helps you focus?”.
- 2 GET STUDENTS MOVING:** Send students out on walks for a set period to discuss a text passage or discussion question.
- 3 FOSTER PEER CONNECTION OUTSIDE CLASSROOM:** Place students in consistent small groups for asynchronous collaboration on meaningful tasks (e.g., a video case study). If groups aren’t needed, have each student pick a “phone-a-friend” for regular check-ins and support when absent. Ensure everyone has a partner.

## THREE WAYS ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS

- 1 ROUTINE BREAKOUT ROOM INTRODUCTIONS:** Start each session by putting people into breakout rooms of two to three (2-3) for a few minutes and ask them to introduce themselves, say hi and check in with each other so that students can meet new people and feel known in the class.
- 2 IMAGE CHECK-IN:** Ask students to bring a picture to the class session that represents how they are feeling.
- 3 EMBRACE PERSONAL REFLECTION AND STORYTELLING:** Invite students to reflect on the content of the course in their personal experiences and provide opportunities for students to share with one another through storytelling and discussion groups. (ex. have students interview someone outside the course in connection with the material and then have them share what they learned from the conversation).

## THREE WAYS ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS

- 1 PROVIDE OPTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT:** While not required – offer a few optional opportunities for students to call/ Zoom in, connect with one another, and ask you questions about the course/assignments. You can have them respond to a short prompt related to content.
- 2 ENGAGING ONLINE INTROS:** Have students post introductions to Canvas before the class starts. These can be text or video contributions where students share about themselves. Consider asking them to answer lighthearted questions.
- 3 HELP STUDENTS FIND WHAT THEY NEED:** Create an “I Need . . .” Canvas module that consists of pages that provide students with information about how to get help with the course or access resources at the university (e.g. “I need a rec letter” with information about what you need to write a strong recommendation letter, or “I need someone to talk to” with information about campus, local, and national mental health resources, etc.).

## THREE WAYS ACROSS MODALITIES

- 1 PRACTICE VULNERABILITY:** Be vulnerable with students about learning and emphasize that you are in this together. Ask students to be slightly vulnerable with each other at the start of the term by kicking off a conversation where everyone responds to a prompt that goes beyond name, major, hometown (ex. share a story of a time you felt energized by learning).
- 2 VALUE YOUR OWN WELL-BEING:** Identify the places where you can pull back to make time for other important aspects of your lives. Talking openly with your students about what you’re doing to care for yourself (i.e., “I won’t be available for office hours at that time because I’ll be out for a run.”) can also help students recognize steps they can take to care for themselves.
- 3 MEET WITH STUDENTS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TERM:** Offer “Meet the Professor” slots for 15 minutes at the beginning of the term to meet as many students one-on-one or in small groups as you can, either in-person or on Zoom. You can offer these for-credit to incentivize.