



# Introductory Surveys Create a Positive Classroom Climate from Day One

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Building a sense of belonging in students has been shown to increase engagement, retention, and learning of students in higher education. Belonging creates an inclusive environment that makes every student feel welcome and respected. A recent meta-analysis of an early intervention tested in 45 US universities showed the power of creating a sense of normalcy that difficulties will arise. Setting expectations of challenge and sharing the experiences of previous students helps to prepare a growth and resilience mindset in freshmen from underserved populations. In large classes, building belonging is more difficult because instructors have fewer opportunities to get to know their students personally. In our large, second-year course in genetics and molecular biology, we have developed an introductory survey based on the student's values, backgrounds, barriers or goals. These surveys give students the message that they are considered individuals, and their opinions are valued and can be expressed in our class. Responses are shared anonymously and similarities in student values are illustrated.

## References

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