



NEWSLETTER FOR LEWIS & CLARK LAW SCHOOL ADJUNCTS

August 2017

AdJUNCT  
*COADUNATIO\**  
*\*gathering together [Latin]*

**Greetings! The start of our Fall 2017 term is just around the corner. This newsletter offers three short articles to help you use the first few classes to set the tone for the term.**

- *Getting Names Right: It's Personal* by Nichole Igwe
- *New Faculty Orientation Features Advice from Students* by Tena Long Golding
- *Participation Points: Making Student Engagement Visible* by Stephanie Almagno

**GETTING NAMES RIGHT: IT'S PERSONAL**

by Nichole Igwe

*Editor's Note: The following article was excerpted with permission from *To My Professor: Student Voices for Great College Teaching*, a new book that brings together student experiences and opinions with advice from master educators and experts. The book was written by students at Michigan State University under the guidance of Joe Grimm, visiting editor in residence in the MSU School of Journalism since 2008.*

"I spend a lot of money to go to school here. It would be nice if a professor knew my name."

"I appreciate the fact that you asked me what I wanted to be called because my name has various pronunciations in different languages."

There are so many ways a simple and personal thing like a person's name can lead to problems. The first student quoted above felt more like a number than a person because she felt none of her professors bothered to learn her name.

The second is an international student who was used to mispronunciations and questioning looks and appreciated a professor's extra effort.

Mishandling names can lead to awkward moments. For many students, name problems come on the first day of class. Here's a tweet with the hashtag #GrowingUpWithMyName. "Knowing the pause on roll call in school was my name. I would just start saying 'Here' before they even tried." Everyone knows what it is like to have their name mispronounced

sometimes. But imagine what it is like to have it happen almost every time—and with an audience of new peers.

While some students might offer a name that they feel will be easier to remember or say, it is not OK for instructors to rename students to make it easier to call roll.

There are those times when the professor calls a student by another student's name. Somehow, the professor has made a connection. Maybe these are the only students of their race or ethnicity in the class. It seems like a little thing, but it carries big implications and it can make others in class feel uncomfortable.

One American college student reported feeling uncomfortable for Asian students when professors stumble over their names—and then turns the mistakes into jokes or ditties. It can humiliate the student and, if they are new to U.S. culture, it can be bewildering.

International names do not have universal spellings or pronunciations across cultures and societies. The student who appreciated a professor's patience in learning the pronunciation of his name is French African. Where he is from, his name has a different intonation and spelling. The student felt very good about his class after this encounter because he perceived that his professor took the time to be personal with her students.

One international student said that she can always sense when professors are about to make a funny attempt at pronouncing her name. "They never ask first but they want to act like they know already, which doesn't usually always end well."

Because names are an important aspect of our identity, acknowledgment of a person's name and its correct pronunciation can signal acceptance of that person into a new culture. Since acknowledgment leads to acceptance, many international students adopt English names to better assimilate. By doing so, they avoid the potential mispronunciation of their names and feel like they fit in. Fitting in can enhance learning.

### **Strategies:**

There are almost as many reasons why it is hard to get names right as there are students in a class. Professors have scores or hundreds of students in a term, and new ones every term. Some professors have more than a thousand students in one term. There are a lot of names to learn.

But learning and using student names improves teaching.

Daniel F. Chambliss, Eugene M. Tobin Distinguished Professor of Sociology at Hamilton College, wrote "the best thing I do to improve students' work in my courses is ... I will learn and use their names. It's easy, and it works. Using those names in class is uniquely powerful."

Here are some strategies:

- Read a class roster out loud before meeting the class. Note potential difficulties. If the class list has photos, try to match them with the names. Print out the pictures and bring them to class.
- Take attendance on the first day in a consistent way with each student, even the ones with seemingly easy names. Use a standard question such as, “What do you like to be called?” One professor sends out a survey before classes begin and asks students for their name preferences. One student seemed delighted when, at the first roll call, she was called by her preferred name, which was not the name on the attendance list.
- Write phonetic spellings down when you need to. When you get to a name that might be difficult, ask the student to say it, using the part of the name you feel more comfortable with. Don’t joke. Don’t rush. Spend a little extra time if you must to understand, but don’t make a big deal. If you need to ask the student for more help, do it after class. If you make a mistake, apologize but don’t make an excuse.

Many international students adopt American names to fit in. But at the same time, there are also instances where foreign students have American names. Whatever the case may be, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire professor Phil Huelsbeck in the department of International Education, advises that professors be actively aware of these differences. He wrote, “Without an audience, ask (repeatedly if necessary) how to pronounce the international student’s name and make a note of the proper pronunciation. Some international students take on an ‘American name’ but it is often appreciated if the instructor takes the time to learn the student’s native name, as well.” It can also teach classmates something.

Marian Kisch, a freelance writer in Maryland, wrote in the November/December, 2014 issue of the *International Educator*: “Even a short conversation after class about the student’s home country can help the student feel more comfortable and can build rapport. Do your best to learn how to pronounce students’ names, even if it takes a few attempts.”

Dustin Carnahan, who teaches in the Michigan State University College of Communication Arts and Sciences, suggested customized rosters, which can accommodate extra columns for chosen names and pronunciations. Students should be able to tell the professor what they want to be called, “no questions asked,” he said.

In “Learning Student Names,” posted on the National Teaching and Learning Forum, Joan Middendorf and Elizabeth Osborn at Indiana University wrote: “A professor who does not know his or her students’ names may be perceived as remote and unapproachable. ... In large classes, the task of learning student names can seem daunting, but even if the professor learns the names of only a portion of the class, a caring, inclusive atmosphere will be established.” They gathered more than 25 strategies for learning and retaining students’ names. They included name tags, tent cards, flashcard drills for the instructor, association and student introductions. There is probably something for most circumstances.

At the end of the day, it is always better to call students by the names they like. As Czech-born writer Milan Kundera wrote in his novel “Immortality,” “We don’t know when our name came into being or how some distant ancestor acquired it. We don’t understand our name at all, we don’t know its history and yet we bear it with exalted fidelity, we merge with it, we like it, we are ridiculously proud of it, as if we had thought it up ourselves in a moment of brilliant inspiration.”

### **Resources:**

Chambliss, Daniel F. “Learn Your Students’ Names.” Inside Higher Ed, Aug. 26, 2014. June 12, 2016 <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2014/08/26/essay-calling-faculty-members-learn-their-students-names>

Huelsbeck, Phil. “Awareness Points for Educators with International Students in the Classroom.” University of Wisconsin. June 12, 2016  
<http://www.uwec.edu/ASC/resources/upload/IntlStu.pdf>

Kisch, Marian. “Helping Faculty Teach International Students.” NAFSA: Association of International Education, International Educator, November/December 2014.

Middendorf, Joan, and Elizabeth Osborn. “Learning Student Names.” Bloomington: Indiana University, 2012. June 12, 2016  
[http://citl.indiana.edu/files/pdf/Lecture\\_Learning\\_Names.pdf](http://citl.indiana.edu/files/pdf/Lecture_Learning_Names.pdf)

Mitchell, Charles. “Short Course in International Business Culture.” Novato: World Trade Press, 1999.

---

*Nichole Igwe is a journalism major and a public relations and French minor at Michigan State University.*

*This article originally appeared in the October 17, 2016 issue of Faculty Focus. © Magna Publications. Reprinted with permission.*

### **NEW FACULTY ORIENTATION FEATURES ADVICE FROM STUDENTS**

by Tena Long Golding, PhD

As director of our faculty support center, one of my responsibilities is to coordinate an orientation program for new faculty. Years ago we decapitated the “talking head” format of traditional orientation sessions and now try to provide interactive sessions that introduce our new colleagues to both our campus policies and our campus culture. While the transition of most topics to the interactive format has been easy, the session on the course syllabus has remained relatively dry—until this year.

On most campuses there are a number of required policy statements that must be included on all syllabi (e.g., disability accommodations, email policy, plagiarism policy, and classroom decorum). All these requirements, while necessary, support the traditional “contract” analogy of a course syllabus. To return the personal touch to the syllabus, our new faculty orientation session on the course syllabus now ... provides a preview of student expectations through student responses to a variety of prompts such as, “What one word describes the most important characteristic for a professor? Who is your favorite professor and why? What advice would you give to a new professor?” Examples of student responses are provided below.

**When asked to give one word to describe a great professor, our students replied:**

- Honest
- Available
- Enthusiastic
- Understanding
- Relatable
- Engaging
- Invested
- Energetic
- Concerned
- Entertaining

**When asked why a professor was their favorite, students offered a variety of reasons, such as:**

- He motivates students every class meeting via video, lecture, guest speaker, etc.
- She incorporates open discussion after the lecture.
- She always makes the lecture entertaining and the class enjoyable.
- He is very straightforward—you know what to expect.
- He connects what we’re learning to the real world.
- She is available to help outside the classroom.
- He treats each student as a person, not a number.
- She takes a personal interest in students beyond the classroom.
- He provides study tips and helps students when they struggle.
- She provides detailed feedback when you miss points.
- She goes the extra mile to make sure you know what you need to know.
- She uses challenging assignments to push students beyond their comfort zone.
- He believes in students and helps them succeed!

**Students then offered faculty the following advice on how to become someone’s favorite professor:**

- Use real-world examples in the classroom.
- Show students that you value them as people.
- Recognize and accommodate different learning styles.
- Be personal—share your story with students.
- Get feedback from students.
- Be available.
- Help struggling students.
- Be relatable—students want to connect with professors on some level.
- Keep communication open.
- Offer virtual office hours if you teach online.

### **Do what you say and say what you do:**

Hearing students' responses to these prompts provides a natural segue to many key elements of a course syllabus—office hours, course requirements, classroom engagement, and student-professor relationships—that we cover during faculty orientation.

We continue the conversation by stating, “Now that you’ve heard students’ expectations, let’s talk about how you will meet theirs and communicate yours!” The discussion is lively (and often amusing) as faculty rebut some of the students’ comments. ... What used to be a session of reading through the requirements is now more of an open discussion on creative ways to communicate expectations and engage with our students. Ideas that surfaced during a recent discussion included:

- Using the first day of class to model expectations. The use of a content-based ice-breaker activity in which every student has to speak sends the message that students are expected to contribute in every class and that every class will be rich with content.
- Using the first day of class to model consequences. A colleague described an activity where one student is selected to leave the room and then asked to contribute to the discussion immediately upon returning to the classroom. Of course, the student has no clue as to what had been said, which serves as a powerful way to demonstrate the importance of attendance and the impact of missing class.
- Creating a short video or podcast and posting it on the course website in the learning management system (Blackboard, Moodle, etc.).
- Asking a successful student from a previous semester to share tips on what to expect and how to be successful—this could be via email, video, or guest appearance.
- Leading an open discussion on the first day of class to give current students some input on select syllabus items.

**Repercussions of not “doing what you say” and failing to follow course guidelines also bubble up in the conversation and give credence to the university-required components of a syllabus. Potential repercussions include:**

- Loss of respect from students
- Poor attendance
- Disengaged students
- Poor performance from students
- Poor student evaluations at the end of the course
- Student complaints that reach the department head and upper administration
- Grade challenges
- Poor annual evaluations from colleagues and/or department head
- Developing a “do not take this professor” reputation

---

*Tena Long Golding has been a faculty member in higher education for over 30 years and a faculty developer for more than 18 of those. She is currently a professor of mathematics and the director of the Center for Faculty Excellence at Southeastern Louisiana University.*

*This article originally appeared in the January 6, 2015 issue of Faculty Focus. © Magna Publications. Reprinted with permission.*

**PARTICIPATION POINTS: MAKING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT VISIBLE**

by Stephanie Almagno, PhD

As I contemplate my syllabi for a new semester, I possess renewed hope for students eager to discuss anything at 8 a.m., yet I have taught long enough to know that I will simply appreciate clean clothes and brushed teeth. As reality sets in, I add to my grading criteria an element that I hope will encourage engagement from even the most timid learners.

Often labeled “participation points,” this topic has been explored from myriad perspectives in any number of books and articles published in the last 20 years. Some approaches to participation include using discussion to facilitate teaching and learning, implementing standard-based grading to eliminate participation points, or creating rubrics for participation to make standards visible to the students.

Here I must acknowledge that my 8 a.m. courses are usually populated by freshmen; many of these students, educated during the NCLB era and fresh from standardized tests and state-mandated EOCTs here in Georgia, struggle to adjust to rigorous college expectations. Most can’t comprehend or articulate our expectations for participation and thus often don’t participate fully.

And here's the rub—first-year students often don't know why engagement is important either in their classroom or their learning. They've yet to learn that participation is an investment in themselves. We know that engaged learners are active learners, but how do we help our students shift from grade seekers to knowledge seekers? Even college students need to be reminded that they are building intellectual and personal skills that will serve them well in all future professional and personal endeavors.

In order to help students become aware of the need for a new level of academic performance, let's change our own strategies concerning participation points.

1. Use a new moniker
  - Instead of participation points, call them engagement points
  - The goal is to move students from grade seekers (passive regurgitation of information—written or verbal) to knowledge seekers (independent, engaged learners who see, reflect on, and share their thoughts on the complexity of problems/situations)
  - Balance preparation and participation
2. Lead with preparation
  - Engagement = Preparation + Participation
  - Create opportunities for students to share homework or research
  - Make homework vital to class conversation and student learning, not simply a formative check preceding a summative assessment
3. Share and review your Engagement Rubric from Day 1 (below is a version of the rubric I created for my 2000- and 3000-level students)
  - Make the balance of preparation and participation part of your classroom routine in independent daily writing or group work by encouraging students to reference their notes and research.
4. Students must score themselves against the Engagement Rubric
  - Metacognitive exercises help students understand their responsibility in their own learning
  - Make this a quick two minute monthly activity
  - Repetition allows students to reacquaint themselves with the desired behavior
  - A monthly check allows you to praise, schedule conferences, or recommend tutoring while the semester is still salvageable.
5. Recognize quiet learners (during and after class)
  - Accept e-mail responses from quiet students
  - Accept reflective e-mails—after class discussion has occurred
  - Ask permission to share their ideas (with attribution) in the next class session
6. Re-direct garrulous students who don't full engage with the content
  - Reinforce preparation by encouraging “talkers” to support their ideas with research, articles, quotations from the text as hand, homework, etc.



**Engagement Rubric:**

ENGAGEMENT	PREPARATION (outside class)	PARTICIPATION (in class)
I am fully engaged	<p>Exemplary Preparation:</p> <p>I read carefully and research background information on the author/topic ahead of time.</p> <p>I research social, cultural, historic, economic, political connections to the text/topic.</p> <p>I consider the course’s Essential Questions as I prepare.</p>	<p>Animated Participation:</p> <p>I attend class and speak daily.</p> <p>I try to advance the conversation by presenting evidence to support by ideas.</p> <p>I present related research, implications, or complexities in the text/situation/topic</p>

Engaged students are agents in their own education. Of course, the sole responsibility for engagement mustn’t fall squarely on the students’ shoulders; professors can prepare the classroom and create daily activities to support knowledge-seeking, engaged students. Take a look at your syllabi and lesson plans to ensure that you provide opportunities for students to share their preparation, research, and new knowledge gleaned, even early in the morning.

---

*Dr. Stephanie Almagno is a professor of English at Piedmont College, Demorest, GA.*

*This article originally appeared in the March 13, 2017 issue of Faculty Focus. © Magna Publications. Reprinted with permission.*