

Design of a Pre-Course "Get to Know You" Survey

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The following sample questions are designed for student engagement and pedagogical alignment. From this selection, 8–12 questions will be curated for a Google Form. Students will be requested to complete the survey on the Thursday preceding the first Monday session, allowing for a comprehensive review of student responses prior to the commencement of the course.

1. What are your primary motivations for enrolling in this course?
2. Where were you born?
3. In what region or community did you spend your formative years?
4. Are you aware of the indigenous lands on which you currently reside?
(<https://native-land.ca/>)
5. How would you describe your personal relationship to your current environment or place?
6. What specific academic or personal goals brought you to this classroom today?
7. What key learning outcomes do you hope to achieve by the end of this term?
8. What do you want to know about me? (the professor)
9. How would you assess your current level of prior knowledge regarding (insert course topic)?
10. How tired are you?
11. What is your mood going into this class?
12. Do we have free will?
13. What is a thought?
14. How did you find this class?
15. What insights about your learning style or personal circumstances would enable me to better support your academic success?
16. What do you wish educators understood about your unique learning experience?
17. Name Preferences: Please share how you want to be refer to. Include Prefixes (Mr., Ms, Mrs, etc), Pronouns (she/he/they/ze/zer/any etc.), Nicknames, and Pronunciations. You can include the story of your name as well.
18. What draws you to (subject)?
19. What are you hoping to do with your (insert what you want them to take away from the class)?
20. Think back to an experience where you were unable to or struggles to learn. What made it challenging?

21. Think back to learning experiences where you enjoyed learning and what you learned stuck with you. What made that possible?
22. What actions can the teaching team take to support your learning?
23. Think back to a teacher/mentor/coach you didn't like. What did you not like?
24. Think back to a teacher/mentor/coach you really appreciate. What did they do that you are grateful for?
25. Think about yourself in the future at the end of this course. What would make it feel like a failure, a waste of your time?
26. Think about yourself in the future at the end of this course. What would make it feel like all the time and effort you invested was worth it?
27. What is something we didn't ask you, that you'd like to share?
28. When sh*t happens that causes you to miss class or fall behind, what works to get you caught up?
29. What is your preferred way to communicate?
30. **Tracking:** Permanent Code Name (Short Answer - *for your spreadsheet*)
31. **Wellness 1:** Guessed Screen Time (Short Answer/Number)
32. **Wellness 2:** Actual Screen Time (Short Answer/Number)
33. **Wellness 3:** Average Sleep (Short Answer/Number)
34. **Confidence:** "How confident do you feel handling a high-heat argument?" (1-5 Scale)
35. **Prior Knowledge:** "In 5 words or less, what is the goal of mediation?" (Short Answer)
36. **Context:** "Which of these major life commitments will take most of your energy this term?" (Checkboxes: Work, Family, 15+ Credits, Other)
37. **Superpower:** "What is one 'hidden talent' you have that we can use in roleplays?" (Short Answer)
38. **The Support:** "Is there anything else I should know to help you succeed this term?" (Optional Paragraph)

Question Type	Research-Backed Framework	Key Academic Goal
Wellness/Sleep	McGuire (Metacognition)	Build awareness of biological capacity for learning.
Superpower	Moll (Funds of Knowledge)	Identify existing assets to use in roleplays.
Value/Goal	Wigfield & Eccles (Expectancy-Value)	Increase motivation by linking skill to career goals.
Code Name/Tracking	TILT (Transparency)	Ensure data privacy while showing group growth.
Optimal Number of Questions	Survey Reliability Design	Collect meaningful answers and keep students both engaged and not overwhelmed

Citation
McGuire, S. Y. (2015). Teach Students How to Learn: Strategies You Can Use to Ace Any Course at Any Level. Stylus Publishing, LLC.
Moll, L. C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., & Gonzalez, N. (1992). "Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms." Theory Into Practice, 31(2), 132-141.
Wigfield, A., & Eccles, J. S. (2000). "Expectancy-Value Theory of Achievement Motivation." Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25(1), 68-81.
Winkelmess, M. A., et al. (2016). "A Teaching Intervention that Improves Underserved College Students' Success." Peer Review, 18(1/2).
Institute of Education Sciences (IES). (2025). Creating Effective Surveys: Best Practices for Survey Design. U.S. Department of Education.

Ways to tell if it worked:

- Have an exit survey so you can compare how they were at the beginning of class and how they were at the end
- See if knowing the answers to these questions make a meaningful change in how I teach the course.
- How does having this survey impact the relationship between students and the professor?

Ask them to pick one of two tracks for homework.

Assignments can be due in two different ways. You choose a track, and then you are held to that track for the entire class.

Track 1: Weekly deadlines. Every week your assignments will be due at 6pm on Thursday.

This is the option for you if you:

- Tend to procrastinate
- Need structure
- Like to complete things in bite size chunks
- Want to get the most benefit from your preparation to impact your performance during class
- Late work option: With this option if you turn in the homework by Friday at 6pm, you can get partial credit.

Track 2: Trio Deadlines: You can turn in your assignments any time before the checks ins that happen each third of the semester. These aren't perfectly even, you just need to finish all work assigned before the roleplay/quiz/exam by the day of the exam.

This is the option for you if you:

- Need flexibility due to work, course load, caretaking, health issues, etc.
- You tend to be on top of your work (you don't procrastinate)
- You will most likely follow along weekly, but the flexibility could help protect your grade for when you need it

- There is no late work option in this track. You turn it in by the deadline for that third or class or it's a zero