

# Send an Early Introduction to Students

Months before meeting our students, faculty are planning for them – so why not send students a message before the semester starts and let them know? You could even make a quick video or prompt your students to read the syllabus before the first class so you can do something more substantive when you meet them face-to-face.

## Get them started

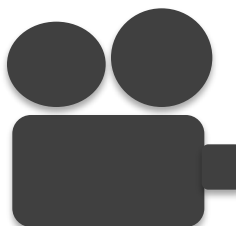
*with the course basics.*

- ☒ syllabus
- ☒ texts
- ☒ Week 1

Allowing students to review the syllabus and prompting them to bring questions to the first class creates a more engaging first day of class and alleviates student anxiety about beginning a new course.

## Make a video

*even if your course is not online.*



Film yourself or use an avatar to create a welcoming environment that humanizes

you and reduces beginning-of-the-semester text to read.

### Why make a video?

Your students will be interested in hearing your voice and seeing you before they meet you in person. Even though creating an introduction video requires more time than writing an email, it is well worth the investment.

### What information to include?

- The following information could be included in your course introductory video or email message:
- A welcome to the institution (if they are new students) and to your course
- An introduction of yourself and your enthusiasm for the topic you are teaching
- The course goals and the importance of this course, including how or why this course is relevant to them
- How/why the course design will help your students achieve the course goals
- Expectations for student participation, perhaps starting with downloading the syllabus and/or posting an introduction about themselves in a forum
- When and where you will meet the first time

**Tip:** If you are new to making videos, create a transcript or an outline of your talking points. [Take a look at this sample video \(mine\) for ideas.](#) You will notice that it's *not* perfect, but it does the job. (Next time I make a video, it will be better – and the time after that, even better. *You cannot get stuck on making a perfect video* – or you will not make any videos.)

Notice that students are prompted to:

- download the syllabus and make notes of their questions to bring to our first class
- take a quick quiz about the syllabus (Just 2 questions: “Could you download the syllabus and read it?” and “What questions do you have?”)
- introduce themselves in a discussion forum

By checking on their responses to these prompts, I’ll know that my students can:

- get into our LMS
- download a document
- take a quiz
- post on a message board

If we suddenly need to cancel classes, I’ll know for sure that my students can connect with me and each other through the LMS and can be prompted to continue their coursework from a distance.

### **Resources**

“Best Practices: Creating Video Course Trailers” Duke University,

<https://trinity.duke.edu/communications/best-practices-creating-video-course-trailers>

“Tips for Creating Instructional Videos” Purdue University Instructional Development Center Blog,

<https://www.purdue.edu/learning/blog/?p=6696>

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