

FROM THE CENTER FOR PRACTICE, TEACHING,
& INNOVATION

5 Ideas: Pre-Semester Prep

Introduction

EMAIL YOUR STUDENTS

Even if you haven't launched Blackboard yet, you can contact students on CUNYFirst from the roster. Introduce yourself with an email - you might even include a short video (smartphone recording is fine!).

Course Setup

LAYOUT MATTERS

Does your course layout make sense? Do students know how/where to navigate? Add a "Start Here" message on your landing page telling students what to do and where to go. Keep some tabs hidden; no need to introduce parts of the course they don't need yet.

Student Engagement

CREATE CONNECTIONS

Prepare a way for students to introduce themselves. Make a survey on Google Forms, give edit access for a Google Doc, or open a discussion forum on Blackboard.

Equitable Syllabus

STUDENT PERCEPTION

Consider your syllabus from a student perspective. Is important information easy to find? Will students feel welcome? Will they know how to succeed from a quick glance? Is the tone approachable for a non-native English speaker? Etc.

Questions?

MAKE A FORUM

Add a place for students to ask questions publicly, then refer to it repeatedly. Encourage students to post general questions on the forum rather than emailing you, and remind them of its existence regularly.