

The Crucial First Week: Engagement Approaches to Promote Student Involvement and Success from Day One

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Composition

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Session Abstract

The first week of classes is crucial for student success. But, how do we successfully reach out to students during the first week and keep them engaged and present in the classroom? Getting students involved in the first week of a class is vital to reach out to their positive well-being and help ensure their retention and success in the course. According to a recent Gallup Poll, “Graduates are 1.4 times more likely to be thriving in five key elements of well-being if a professor cared about them as a person” (Gallup, 2022. p.1). The instructor's tone, clarity, and empathy help to provide students with a positive learning environment and is demonstrated in the instructor's communication with students. This is crucial in the first week to reach out to the whole student to provide the needed encouragement.

Furthermore, providing an engaging environment for students from day one is crucial for their retention and success, as $\frac{1}{3}$ of students do not make it through their first year in higher education (Deloitte, 2017). Providing support, opportunities, as well as resources in the first week, can go a long way to keeping our students active and engaged. In this session, we will discuss the importance and suggestions of outreach timing during the first week of classes and examples to help successfully reach out and engage students. Specific examples will include timed announcements, emails, and seminars to help reach out to the whole student and promote engagement and retention in the classroom.

Session Outcomes

Learn the concepts of the first-week outreach



Discover strategies to engage and retain students



Provide opportunities for further learning and direct application into courses

Agenda

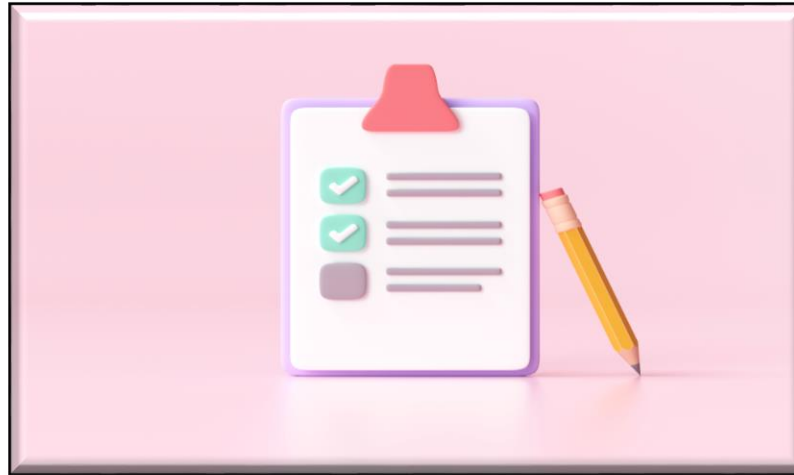
- Why is the First Week Important?
- Student Engagement and Student Achievement
- Outreach Timeline
- Research on First Week Contact
- Timeline of Contact Examples
- Examples of Contact Strategies
- Emails, Announcements, Seminar
- Student Testimony
- Additional Resources and Discussion
- References



POLL TIME!!!

What do you PRIMARILY currently do to engage students during **the first week** of the course? –You may do all of these but what is your primary tool?

- A. Welcome email with course information
- B. Call/Text students
- C. Individualized or Group Google Meetings
- D. Post Targeted Engagement Announcements
- E. Other?? (please type in chat)



Is Contact During the First Week Important?



Why is the First Week Contact Important?

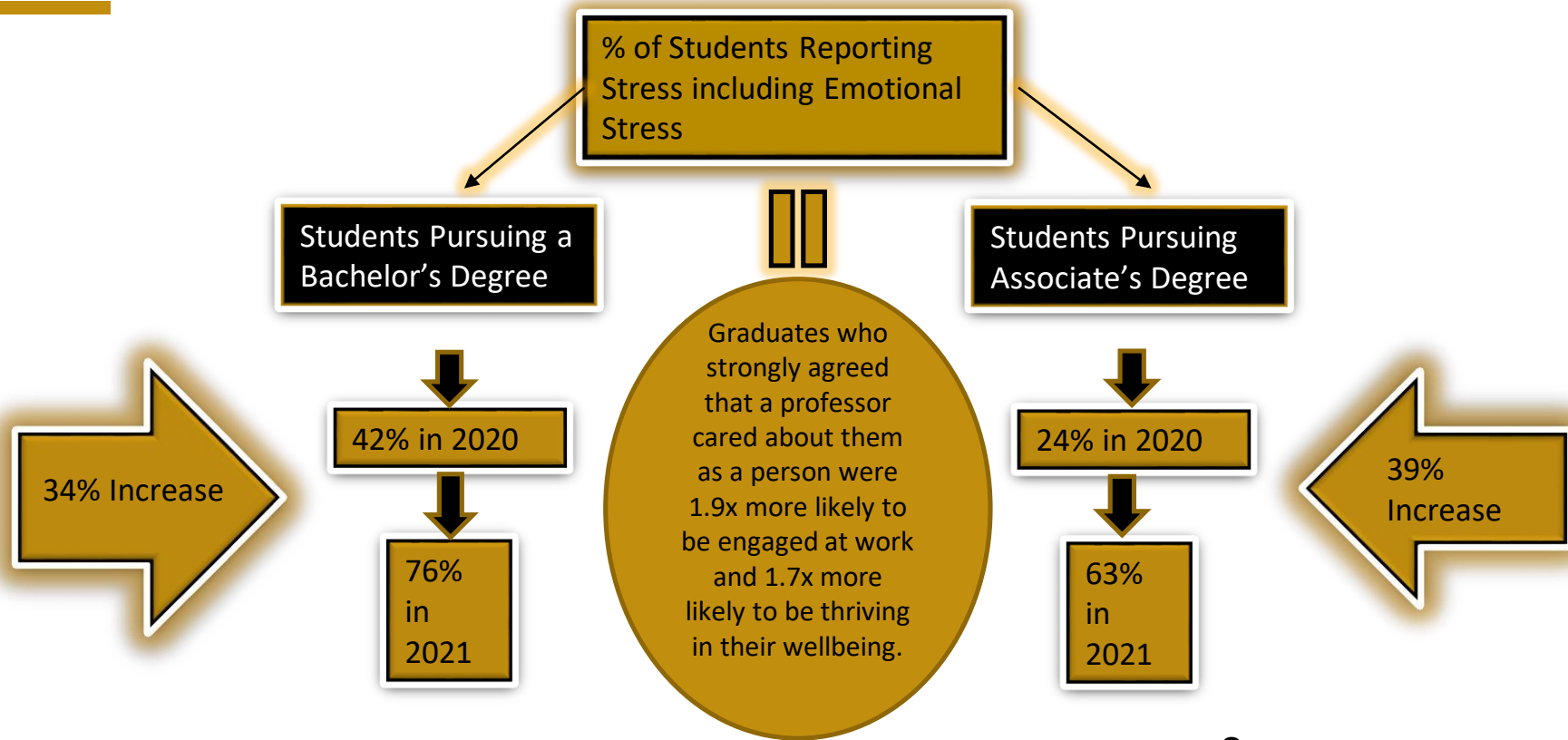
What Can We Do?

- Welcome Students
- Provide Support
- Engage Learning
- Build a Community
- Empower learning

According to The Chronicle of Higher Education, as many as 30% of freshmen do not re-enroll. At 2 year universities, the number is even higher, at 46%.

The “first five minutes” is often heralded as the most crucial, and underappreciated, moment to promote student motivation and engagement. Instructors can deploy a variety of strategies depending on local class culture (Yale, 2021)

Student Engagement and Student Achievement



Source:
(Gallup, 2022)

A word cloud shaped like a handshake, with words like 'cooperate', 'unite', 'communicate', 'assist', 'serve', 'collaborate', 'help out', 'merge', 'expand', 'share', 'include', 'welcome', 'bridge', 'negotiate', 'organize', 'support', 'merry', 'blend', 'interweave', 'interrelate', 'combine', 'reach out', 'tolerate', 'understand', 'respect', 'enlist', 'join in', 'synthesize', 'connect', 'attune', 'reach out', 'tolerate', 'understand', 'respect', 'enlist', 'join in', 'synthesize', 'connect', 'attune'.

Timeline Example of Contact/Outreach

Day 1

- Welcome Email (schedule 10 or 11am)- Announcement (**Wednesday**)

Day 1 PM

- Email with encouragement and information. Evening (7pm)- (seminar reminder and info as well) (**Wednesday**)

Day 2

- Congratulatory email of the first day accomplishment- ask them how they are and offer encouragement (**Thursday**)

Day 3

- Email/Announcement regarding connections and opportunities on campus (**Friday**)

Day 5

- Reach out and offer info email on Unit 1 tasks– encouragement announcement and email (**Sunday**)

Day 7

- Reminder email of what is due and information (**Tuesday**)

Unit 2
Day 1

- Congratulations email/announcement after the first week as well as encouragement to those who did not get everything submitted (**Wednesday Unit 2**)

Email Outreach Examples



Email: 2nd Day of Class

Hello Student X,

How are you today? I just wanted to check-in with you to see how you are doing. I am right here if you have any questions.

If you are feeling overwhelmed or unsure, it is perfectly normal at this stage of our class because everyone feels this way at the beginning of the term. If that is how you feel, I promise you that it does get easier once you get past the first week. In the meantime, you can come to me with any questions at all. We can set a call if it is easier as well. I'd love to set up a quick chat. Also, please see the attached files that might help.

Remember, come to me with any questions at all. You are not alone and I am here with you every step of the way. I'd love to hear about how you are doing and how your week is going as well.

What is due for the first week? (Unit 1)

- Unit 1 Journal
- Seminar (attend live or submit the Option 2)
- Discussion board (initial posting and responses to your peers)
- Lab (the Hawkes Learning which is also where the reading is located).

This is all due for Unit 1 on March 29th, 11:59PM Eastern Time.

Kindly,

Prof X

Email: Sunday Unit 1

Hello **Student X**,

I hope you are having a lovely weekend. I wanted to check in with you to see how you are doing during our first week. I want you to know you should be very proud of yourself because it is brave what you are doing going to college and going after your goals

You can do this! But, if you are frustrated and confused, that is okay and many students feel this way. That is also why I am here for you to contact me anytime. **profX@purdueglobal.edu**. I'd be happy to set up a call or a video chat as well at a time that works for you.

Remember a few things: Reggie Jackson, Baseball Hall of Famer, has the most strikeout record but he is known for his hits and homeruns and being Mr. October winning 5 World Series. Colonel Sanders of KFC did not get his big break until he was 65. Thomas Edison took over 10,000 tries to invent the light bulb.

What I am telling you here is it is never too late and we learn more and grow more character based on the times we've fallen and keep getting back up again.

Please feel more than free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I am there for you. :)

[Please enjoy this short video with some powerful quotes! https://youtu.be/zPF9NynybXY](https://youtu.be/zPF9NynybXY)

Be sure to scroll through all the important info and attachments:

(Unit task info here)

Kindly,

Prof X

profx@purdueglobal.edu

Tuesday of Unit 1

Hello Student X,

How are you doing? This is just a friendly reminder that Unit 1 in our course is due tonight (**August 30th at 11:59PM** Eastern Time).

Unit 1 Includes:

- Unit 1 seminar- either attended live OR watching the recording back and submitting Option 2 to the dropbox)
- Unit 1 Journal- submit in the dropbox via the Assignments tab at the top of the classroom
- Unit 1 Discussion Board- your initial posting and your responses to your peer initial postings
- Unit 1 Hawkes Learning- the lab for our class= be sure to click on Certify for your score to save.

I am right here if you have any questions or concerns. Just know that if you feel overwhelmed, everyone feels that way at the beginning of the term and that is okay. You should be proud of what you have already accomplished in our class and I am proud of you too! I promise it will get easier as we go along in our class. But, I am here every step of the way as well.

Kindly

Prof X

profx@purdueglobal.edu

Email: Day 1 of Unit 2

Hello **Student X**!

I hope you are doing well. I wanted to take a moment to congratulate you on making it through Unit 1. It is perfectly natural for the first couple of weeks of a course to feel overwhelmed and to even feel like giving up. But, it absolutely will get easier as the class goes on and you get into the swing of things.

I also want you to know I am right here for you if you have any questions or concerns. I am just an email away and I am here to support your success. Don't forget that we have great live tutoring here that will help you with your writing needs and that I allow assignment revisions in our class.

If you were unable to finish Unit 1, or got started in our class a little late, you can still catch up. Know that you can do this and we can do this together. See you in seminar! In the meantime, check out this great video here: [Video](#)

Best,

Prof X

Announcements



Announcements

- Before Term: Announcement Congratulating them on the accomplishment of being in our class
- Day 1: Motivation and encouragement with short (3 min or less)
- Day 3 (Friday) Unit 1: Show Empathy and Compassion
- Day 5 (Sunday) Unit 1: Create a Sense of Community
- Day 7 (Tuesday) Unit 1: Show Understanding and Resources
- Day 1(Wednesday) Unit 2: Congratulate Their Achievement!
- Day 1 of every week- Motivational announcement with video

Before Term

Hello Students,

Congratulations on your amazing accomplishment and hard work for making your way through your own higher education in your pursuit of your dreams and goals!!!! Please watch the video below and know this: You are limitless! You can achieve your dreams!!



YouTube. (August 19th, 2015). Nothing Will Stop Me- Motivational Video. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/wa>

Friday of Unit 1

Hello Everyone,
Happy Friday!

I hope you take advantage of this great video I found today along with a great webinar recording from our Writing Center about dealing with stress management.

Link to a great video: <https://youtu.be/gMWXMMUg5pI>
Link to the Stress Management video recording: <https://khe.adobeconnect.com/pry6sigm3vqs/>

Feel free to drop me a message about how you are doing and if you need any help at all. profX@purdueglobal.edu

Best,
Prof X



Sunday of Unit 1



Hello Everyone!

How are you doing? I wanted to share some great resources we have here at Purdue Global University to connect and to help you succeed. :) There are clubs, honor societies, and associations. In the Student Life area of the Campus, you can find the calendar of when there are online meetings and events for each of these social opportunities. Here is the direct link to this part of the campus: <https://campus.purdueglobal.edu/page/student-life> You can find these resources in the Student Life area of our campus but here is some info below:

How do you join any of these groups below? Email Student life at studentlife@purdueglobal.edu

Questions?

Email: studentlife@purdueglobal.edu

Feeling overwhelmed at all: check out the Student Assistance Page in our Campus as well <https://campus.purdueglobal.edu/page/student-assistance-program>

Tuesday of Unit 1

Hello Everyone,

Please check out these great videos that aim to help with Time management and how to cope with feeling overwhelmed as a student. I am here for you for any questions or concerns.

Time Management Webinar

<https://khe2.adobeconnect.com/piqyg6a0q053/>

Helping with Being Overwhelmed Webinar

<https://khe2.adobeconnect.com/pmsx25daosi4/>

Best,

Prof X

profx@purdueglobal.edu



Wednesday Unit 2

Hello Students,



All of you should be so proud of yourselves for now making it through our first week of class. I am here every step of the way to guide you on your journey. But, never forget that no one can limit you or tell you who you are or what you can accomplish except for yourself. If you having any concerns at all, come to me we can work through it all together.

You are truly limitless! Please take a look at this video and I hope all of you can see in yourselves that you can do anything, accomplish anything, and be anything! We can make it through together!

Best,

Prof X

Student Testimonies: Outreach Works!

Thank you so much! I really appreciate you reaching out to me! I can't lie I am still a little confused and don't know if I got everything done right, It is hard to manage my time but this is something that I really want so I have to work very hard for it! thank you! (Student A)

Everything is well. thank you for asking is gives me such confidence moving forward in this journey knowing my instructor actually cares if we are successful or not, so again thank you for this. (Student B)

I appreciate the check-in with me! At the moment, I am currently trying to grab my bearings with online schooling as well as balancing it with my job and personal life. But with time and effort, I am sure that I will be able to succeed in your class and the others. I look forward to learning a lot more from this class! Sincerely, (Student C)

Thank you so much Prof Lee! I was able to get all of my assignments accomplished by yesterday afternoon, whew! I am definitely feeling the burn of classes and work and kids, but I'm definitely on the right track for organizing my time. Thank you so much for being so supportive and I will be in touch for any issues that arise. Again, thank you!! (Student D)

Seminar Opportunities



Positive Engagement During Seminar

Positive Affirmations

1. I am love. I am purpose. I was made with divine intention
2. I don't sweat the small stuff.
3. I can. I will. End of story.
4. I am adventurous. I overcome fears by following my dreams.
5. I feed my spirit. I train my body. I focus my mind. It's my time.
6. I am in charge of how I feel and today I am choosing happiness.
7. I am my own superhero.
8. I will not compare myself to strangers on the Internet.
9. My presence is my power.
10. When you really want it, you are unstoppable.
- 11.. I am choosing and not waiting to be chosen.
12. I am enough.
13. I am whole.
14. I have the power to create change.
15. I let go of all that no longer serves me.
16. I can do all the things.
17. I refuse to give up because I haven't tried all possible ways.
18. I deserve the best and I accept the best now.
19. I'm going to make you so proud.

The Comfort Zone

I used to have a comfort zone where I knew I could not fail. The same four walls and busy work were really more like jail. I longed so much, to do the things I've never done before. But I stayed inside my comfort zone and paced the same old floor.

I said it didn't matter that I wasn't doing much.

I said I didn't care for things like diamonds, cars, and such. I claimed to be so busy with the things inside my zone, But deep inside I longed for some victory of my own.

I couldn't let my life go by just watching others win.

I held my breath and stepped outside to let the change begin. I took a step with the strength I'd never felt before.

I kissed my comfort-zone goodbye, and closed, and locked the door.

If you are in a comfort zone, afraid to venture out.

Remember that all winners at one time were filled with doubt. A step or two, and words of praise can make your dreams come true. So greet your future with a smile....

SUCCESS IS THERE FOR YOU!

Source: Magee via a
Student

Getting to Know Your Students= Let Them Get to Know You

LET'S TAKE A MOMENT... Let's get to know each other :)

What can you share about yourself with our class?

Children?
Pets?
Hobbies?
Something unique about yourself?

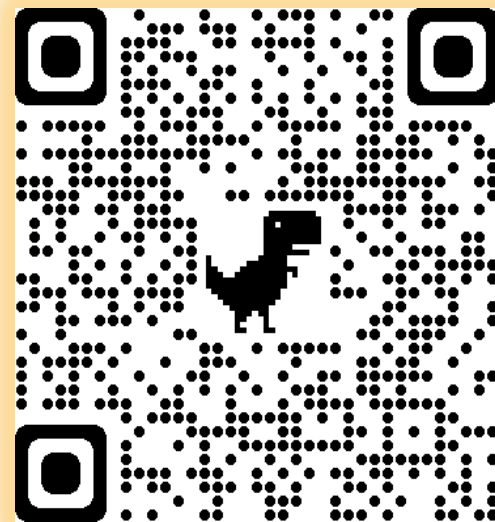


Resources

Motivational Quotes

Purdue Global Ambassadors Beth Lee and Carol T. Edwards, share inspirational quotes by a variety of authors and invite you to share with colleagues and students. We hope these inspire you! Click on the button below to access quotes.

Motivational Quotes



Discussion Time!

Let's Share:


What do you do in your classes?

**What are other strategies,
resources, tools, and tips for student
engagement the First Week?**



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