

## Teaching Tip 1: Getting to Know Your Students

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This teaching tip requires little or no effort. At the beginning of the semester have each of your students post a short biographical sketch with a photo of their choice in the Learning Management System using the forum function. The instructions might read

*“In this forum post a short biographical sketch and be sure to include something memorable about yourself and a recent photo, a selfie is fine.”*



Give students a week to post their biographical sketch. You can incentivize by awarding a few participation points or simply reminding students that posting is a course expectation. Once the due date has past you can compile the posts by copying and pasting then in bulk to a Word document.

To encourage and reward students it is good to make a few comments regarding the posts at the start of several classes, e.g.

*“I really like the post from; Name \_\_\_\_\_, or student \_\_\_\_ has an interesting post.”*

This serves to remind students that you actually look at the forum, you can also comment in the forum on individual posts.

The advantages are you and the class learn something about each individual, students get writing practice using a low-stakes learning activity and most importantly it helps to establish a sense of community.

To be fair you should also post a biographical sketch with a photo. This helps students to see you as a person in addition to being their professor, and provides a model of what a good bio-sketch looks like. Most students have not written a biographical sketch, which as professionals we all need to be able to do. You may want to designate a minimal or maximum number of words and the size (mb) of the photo.



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