

GLCA: Teaching Writing to Multilingual International Students in a Small Liberal Arts

Setting, College of Wooster, November 1-3, 2019

Inclusive Classrooms and Student Agency Module, *Dr. Tamara Stasik*

8. Faculty/Student Activity- Pronounce students' names correctly

Another remarkably simple and very effective way to foster an inclusive learning environment and to demonstrate respect through inclusion of multiple identity groups is to pronounce student's preferred names correctly. This is not always easy, but there are [pronunciation guides](#) and now several programs or apps that will pronounce a typed name or allow you to record your own. Having students record their own names adds personality, increases empathy, and allows students to express themselves in a different mode. By making this a part of your first day activities, it can be fun and this concerted effort will engage students in an authentic activity.

Faculty Activity:

Check your learning management system (Moodle, Blackboard, Canvas, etc.) for ways to personalize name pronunciation.

Exercise 1: Recording your name in an LMS

For example, in Moodle:

- Log in, Click on your name (top right) and select "Profile"
- Under "User details", select "Edit profile"
- In the "Description" section, select the microphone icon and record your name
- Go to the bottom of the page and select "Update profile"
- If you need to update your pronunciation, edit the Description section. Delete the original recording and make a new recording.

To hear how to pronounce other peoples' names in Moodle:

- In your Moodle course, select the Participants list in the left-hand navigation column
- Click on a name
- Play the audio located under their name and photo

Student Activities

Student use of the LMS

Students, too, can change their name pronunciations in the same way above. In interactions where students see each other's names, ask students to sign off their forum posts or other communications with the name they go by. If students are responding to one another, ask students to address students by the name they go by, not the name in the LMS.

Exercise #2: NameCoach Badge to append to email signatures, websites etc.

On their own computers or phones, have your students record their names on the website: NameCoach.com. This is a free service that many educational or business

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institutions use to voice-record your name, and add other personalizing details, such as the meaning of your name, origin, family or funny stories associated with your name. Once recorded, you can create a “name badge” that can be added on digital accounts such as email, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

<https://www.name-coach.com/namebadge>

The activity itself can be community building, and the visibility of the badge as well as the availability of the recording for practice and reminders promotes a genuine interest in learning your student’s names (and stories!).

The following are suggested activities from Christina Moore, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at OU. Updated October 2018, originally published December 2016.

Request pronunciation. If you aren’t sure how to pronounce a student’s name, try and try again! Students with names that people struggle to pronounce will appreciate your effort to pronounce their name. Every student deserves to be named, even if the professor doesn’t say it very well!

Beware of name bias. Getting names right is important. By giving up on remembering or pronouncing certain students’ names, you could unintentionally favor attention to students with more accessible names, which often means misses an opportunity to tap into diverse perspectives.

Model Preferred Names The name each instructor decides to go by in class is an individual and political choice. Whatever you choose, go with it and make sure students know how they should refer to you. (Understand that they have to navigate a different naming structure for each instructor they have.) Students will try to go the whole semester by not calling you anything, so repeat your name often and insist they refer to you that way!

- On day 1, introduce yourself by your preferred name. Announce to the class your preferred name and title. Your name in the university’s communication systems may not be what you go by, so this is important for you too!
- On day 1, make your own desk name tag. If you have students do this activity from page 1, make your own as well. This reinforces for the student your preferred title. Dr. Smith....Prof. Smith....Marcy.....Ms. Smith.....Master Smith.....
- Repeat your preferred name in hypothetical situations. Students need to see and hear your preferred name often so that they are certain this is how you want to be referred to. Therefore, say it when you are going over student questions or other hypothetical situations. Example: “Students often ask me, ‘Dr. Smith, why are we covering this issue in this class?’”
- Sign off emails with your preferred name. This is what instructors most often do to reinforce this naming norm. It’s repetitious and visual—a good tool to use.