"What made you feel a **sense of belonging** when you were a student?"

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Fostering Familismo

Agenda

I. Introduction
II. Research Background
III. Student-centered Approaches
    A. Creating a Welcoming Environment
    B. Faculty and Student Connections
    C. Peer-to-Peer Connections
    D. Assignments
IV. Wrap-Up

Introduction

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- Doctoral candidate
- 10 years community college teaching experience
- Immigrant rights activist
- Los Angeles Office of the Mayor: Summer Night Lights community liaison

Dr. Celina Benavides

- Assistant Professor of Psychology
- 10 years community college and CSU teaching experience
- 17+ years within education field
- Director (3 yrs) of non-profit supporting working, community college students

Research Background

2.1 million students in California community colleges

Within VCCCD:

- 64% are students of color
- 69% are 24 years or younger, 28% (25-50 yrs)
- 60% Female, 38% male, 1% non-binary
- 63% of students receive Pell Grant or CA Promise

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office: https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Digital-Innovation-and-Infrastructure/research-data-analytics/data-snapshot/student-demographics
https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Digital-Innovation-and-Infrastructure/research-data-analytics/data-snapshot/student-demographics#:~:text=The%20race%2Fethnicity%20of%20students,Islander%2C%20and%206%25%20unknown.
Ventura Community Community College District. (2022). Institutional Effectiveness, Research & Economic Workforce Development. https://www.vcccd.edu/departments/institutional-effectiveness-research-economic-workforce-development

Supporting Success

Important predictor of success:

Students feeling a sense of belonging

- **Connections to:**
  - Faculty
  - Staff
  - Peers
- **Utilizing campus resources**

What is Familismo?

- **Familial solidarity that includes:**
  - Attachment
  - Loyalty
  - Responsibility towards family and extended family members
  - Family needs placed above individual needs
  - Emphasis on collective rather than individual

Source: “Cultivating familismo” - S.M. Gonzales

Outcomes of Familismo

- Student resilience
- Positive learning outcomes
- Peer-group attachment and support minimizes barriers
- Approach allows institutions to meet student needs
  - Rather than expecting students to acculturate to mainstream culture
- Students feel accepted and validated
- Increased **sense of belonging**

Source: “Cultivating familismo” - S.M. Gonzales

Sense of Belonging

What Is It?

- Feeling of connectedness
- Sense that one is important/matters to others
- Perceived support from peers, teachers, family

What Does It Look Like?

- Notice
- Nurture
- Believe
- Care for
- Positive Feedback
- Validation
- Build relationships
- Positive interactions

Outcomes

- Confidence
- Reduced fear of failure
- Sense of self worth
- Improved transfer outcomes

Sources: Arteaga, 2015; Booth et al., 2017; Cox, 2009; Delgado Bernal, 2002; Dowd et al., 2013; García Louis et al., 2020; Strayhorn, 2018; Winterer et al., 2020

Familismo in Action

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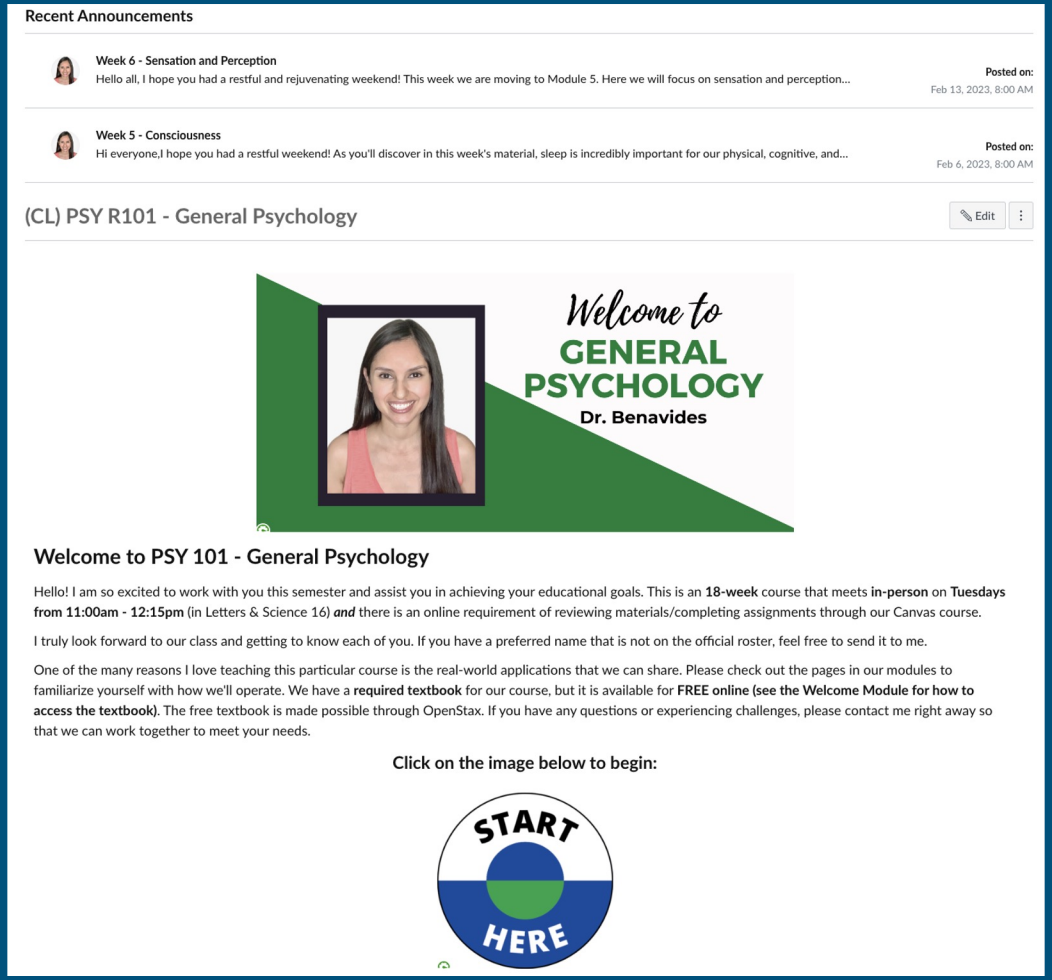
Creating a Welcoming Environment

Enhancing our Canvas Homepage

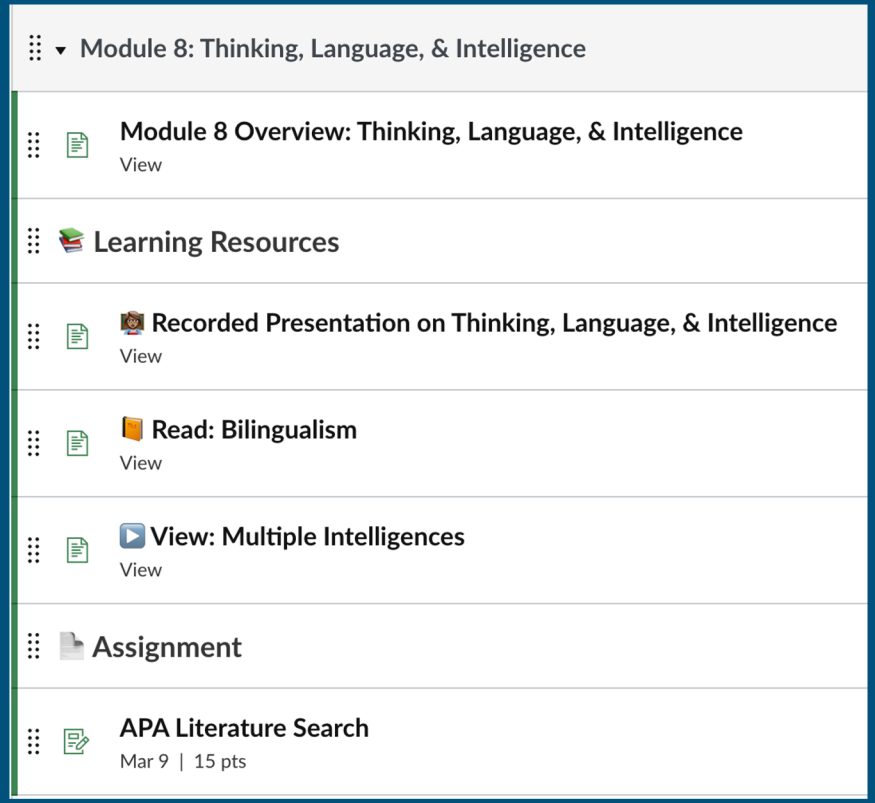
- Add a cover image
- Instructor photo or video on homepage
- Welcome message
- Start link
- Other ideas:
  - Showing 1-2 weekly announcements
  - Editing link to that week's module



Canvas Set-Up

- **Use icons for Module Pages**
  - Helps with navigation
  - Feels familiar

- **Within Modules**
  - Images with text accessibility



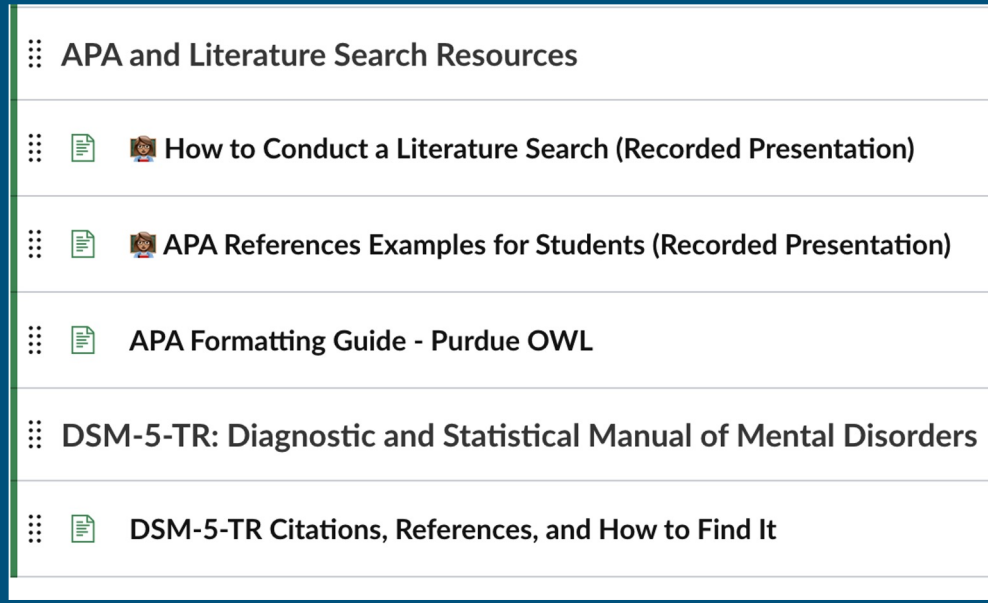
Using Canvas to Explain “How-to”

Peer (and Instructor) support on how to…

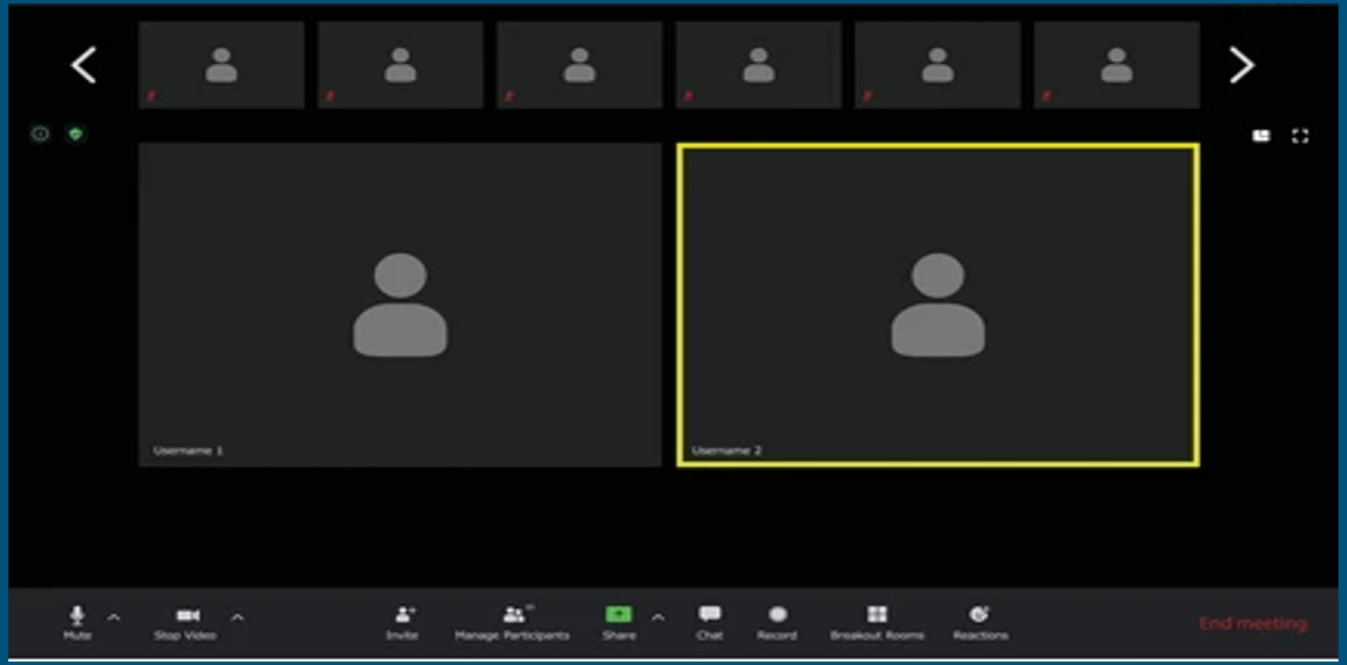
- …take notes
- …study for exams

Instructor support on how to…

- …find reputable sources
- …citing
  - **SHOW *how*** to do so with examples and ways to get more help



Zoom Helpful Tips



Zoom Helpful Tips

- Step-by-step on how to add Zoom background
- Pausing/taking breaks for conceptual check-ins
  - Polls
  - Thumbs up/thumbs down
- Whiteboard or Google Doc

- Breakout Room Guidelines
  - Give Task
  - Question for groups to discuss
- How will students share back?
  - In chat?
  - Representative from each breakout group?

Faculty and Student Connections

Faculty and Student Connections

Goal = Student Validation

- Acknowledgement of:
  - Who they are
  - Where they come from
  - What they have already achieved

Student Survey

- Which classes are you taking this semester?
- Do you currently work?
- How do you learn best?
- Where are you planning to transfer?
- What career(s) are you interested in?

Faculty and Student Connections

Follow Up with Students

- Circling back to things they've shared
- Asking how their classes are going
- Reminders about upcoming due dates

Office Hours

- Give examples of what's usually discussed during office hours
- Review past assignments
- Go over grades
- Discuss upcoming assignments
- Take notes

Connecting Students to Resources

- Individuals *within* departments on campus
- External support resources
- Connecting to alumni

Sources: Holschuh, J. & Nist, S.L. (2000); Kuh, G.D., & Hu, S. (2001); Vermette, P.J. (2000, December)

Peer-to-Peer Connections

Peer-to-Peer Connections

- “Introduce Yourself” Discussion
  - Guidelines on what to post AND how to respond to peers

- During lectures pause for **peer** check-ins
  - Pose questions for students to discuss with a partner
  - Remind to share name AND response to question

- Encourage sharing contact info
- Create space for students to share study tips

Peer-to-Peer Connections

End of Class (end of year assignment or extra credit)

- What tips would you share with the next class of students?
- Discussion Board: Students can share classes they're taking next semester

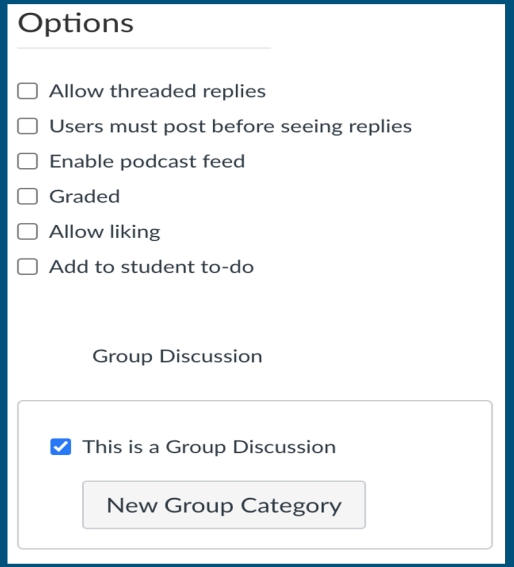
Issue: Students Voice Loss of Peer Connection at Course Conclusion

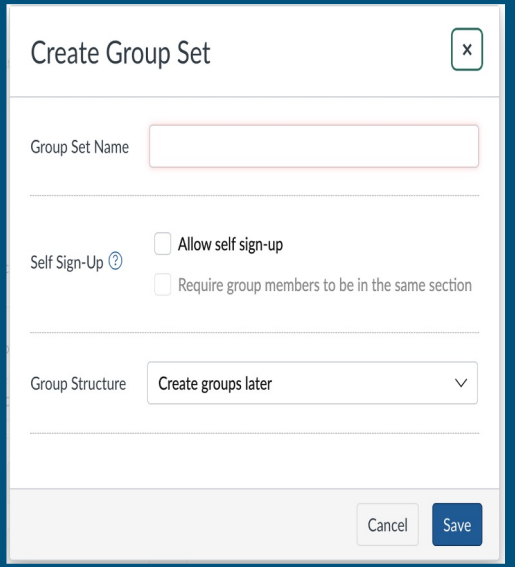
- How do we help students maintain class peer connection beyond the class?

Assignments

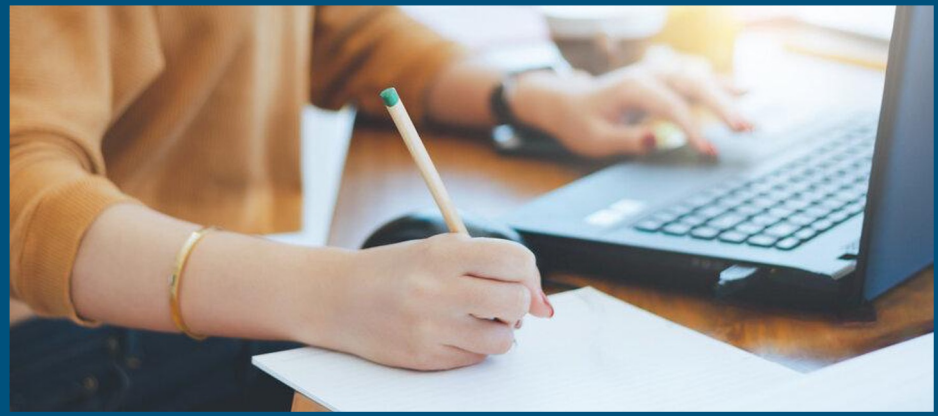
Assignments

- **Options for Small Group Discussions**
  - By predetermined groups (topics or group sizing)





Assignments



- **Faculty feedback**
  - Mindful, not deficit-minded
  - Use rubrics
  - Provide audio or video feedback
- **Encourage collaboration**
  - Discussing assignments
  - Co-researching
- **Non-academic activities to increase familismo & sense of belonging**
  - Share campus and community events
  - Post optional resources and quizzes

Wrap-Up

Thank you!

Access Resources Here

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