

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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Teaching and Learning Services



Learning to Teach Day, November 9, 2019



Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

The Game Plan

(Session Overview)

- Quick Introductions
- Develop a Working Definition
- Create Student Profiles
- Explore Strategies for Building Community
- Implement Strategies for Building Community

Quick Introductions

- Please share:
 - Your name, program, and role
 - Why you're attending this session
 - One community to which you belong

Introduction to the Initiative



Introduction to the Toolkit

The screenshot shows the McGill Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) website. The header includes the McGill logo, the text "Teaching and Learning Services (TLS)", and "A member of Student Life and Learning". A search bar and "Quick Links" dropdown are also visible. The navigation menu includes "About Us", "Teaching @ McGill", "Learning @ McGill", "Graduate Education", "Teaching & Learning Spaces", and "Projects". The breadcrumb trail reads "McGill.CA / TEACHING AND LEARNING SERVICES (TLS) / Projects". The main content area features a red "Faculty of Arts Toolkit" header, a list of menu items (Welcome to the Toolkit, Preamble, Course Design: Preparatory Tools, Course Design: First Day of Class Tools, Course Design: Ongoing Tools, Students in Difficulty, Getting Feedback from Students on the Classroom Community), and a large graphic with the title "Faculty of Arts Toolkit for Building Connections in the Classroom". The graphic text describes the toolkit as a collaborative initiative between the Faculty of Arts and TLS, designed for instructors to foster a sense of belonging. A "Access the toolkit" button is located at the bottom of the graphic.

The cover of the toolkit features a decorative flourish at the top, followed by the title "BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM" in large blue letters. Below the title is the subtitle "A Toolkit for Instructors in the Faculty of Arts" and a stylized blue bird logo. At the bottom, the date "SEPTEMBER 1, 2017" and "McGill University" are printed.

Introduction to this Session: Content

Strategies we'll
discuss today

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Introduction to this Session: Learning Outcomes

1. Understand how an instructor's choice of teaching and learning strategies influence the sense of community that students feel in the classroom.
2. Apply practical strategies for community building to realistic classroom contexts.
3. Reflect on the importance of community in the classroom as a principle.



Introduction to the Session: The Space and Session Norms

(Developed collaboratively)

- The closest accessible washroom is on the third floor.
- The closest gender neutral washroom is on the second floor.
- Feel free to move or position yourself in the way that you feel most comfortable.
- Ask questions at any time about anything.
- Use technology as you wish.
- If you no longer want to participate, or need to step out of the room for a moment, please do so – no explanation is required.
- Raise your hand and do not interrupt colleagues

Working Definition: “Community in the Classroom”

What do students experience or feel when there is community in the classroom?

(Developed collaboratively)

- “A sense of belonging where all students feel best able to learn”
- A sense of ownership, and engagement in the course and learning (beyond being a passive receiver of information).
- Being able to be vulnerable with others in the classroom (e.g. being able to ask questions, being comfortable with not knowing something, being honest about how you’re feeling).
- Sharing a common goal.
- Feeling comfortable to belong to the community that you belong while among classmates, but not using your values to judge others.
- Made up of diverse persons with different abilities who have a willingness to learn from each other.
- People knowing each other and caring about each other.

Refining Our Working Definition: “Community in the Classroom”

<https://youtu.be/hF9AQKTcgJU?t=41>



Create Your Student Profile

- What is their name?
- What do they study?
- What barriers to learning do they experience?
- What is their passion?

Explore Strategies for Building Community

1. Review your student profile.
2. Consider the following question:

*Using our working definition,
how can you build a community in the classroom
for this student?*

3. Define your own context.
4. View suggested strategies and record your own strategies for before classes begin, the first day of class, and throughout the semester.

Explore Strategies for Building Community

Rafael

Before class begins, explore potential supports for language learning
Meet with him to understand the history of the issue & what has worked before. (Hand in papers in ~~the~~ mother tongue?)

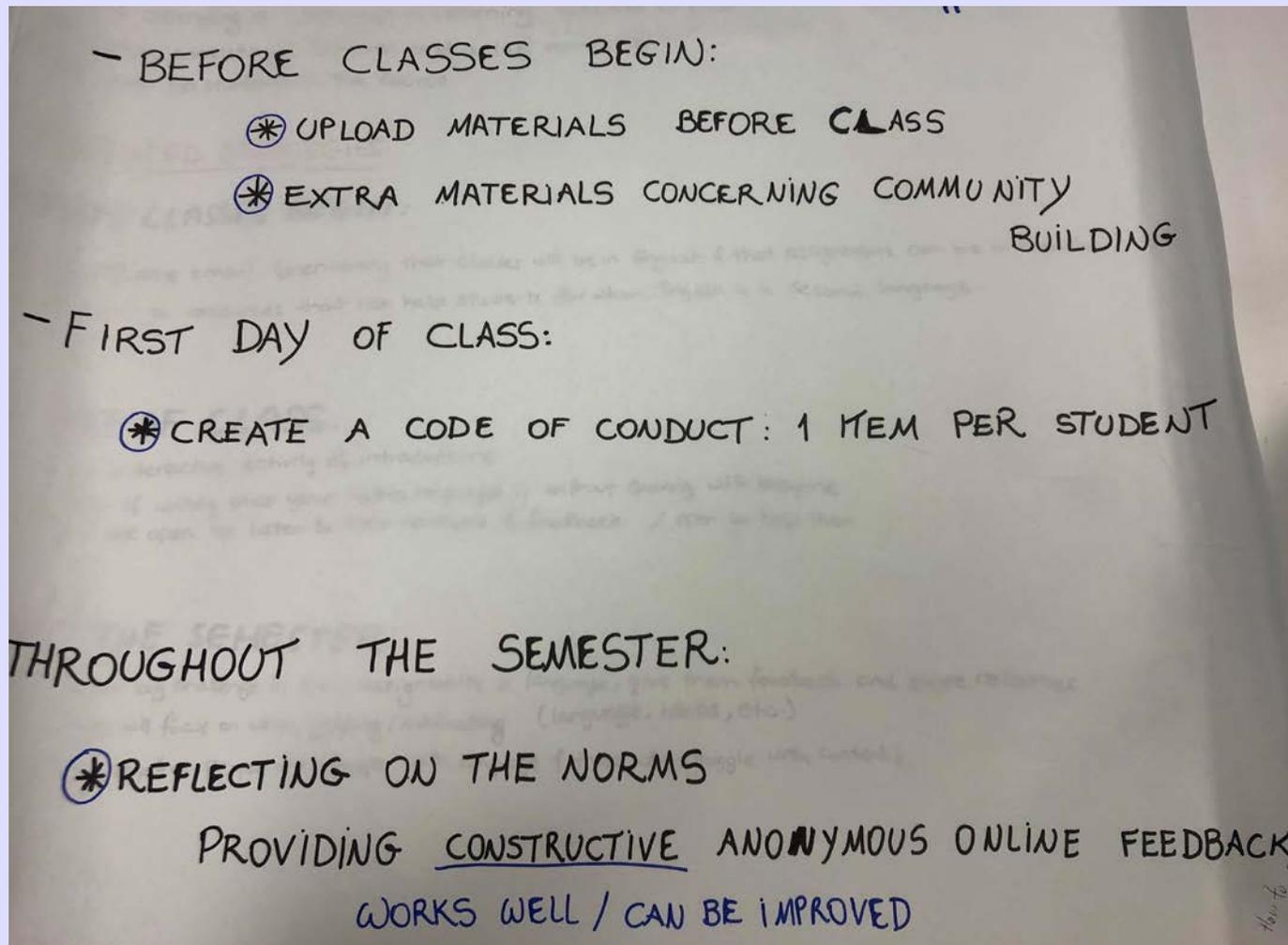
Classroom guidelines- have students suggest effective learning strategies for them (breaks, videos, etc) - anonymous suggestions?

Frequently change small groups, addressing that it gives everyone the chance to learn from each other.

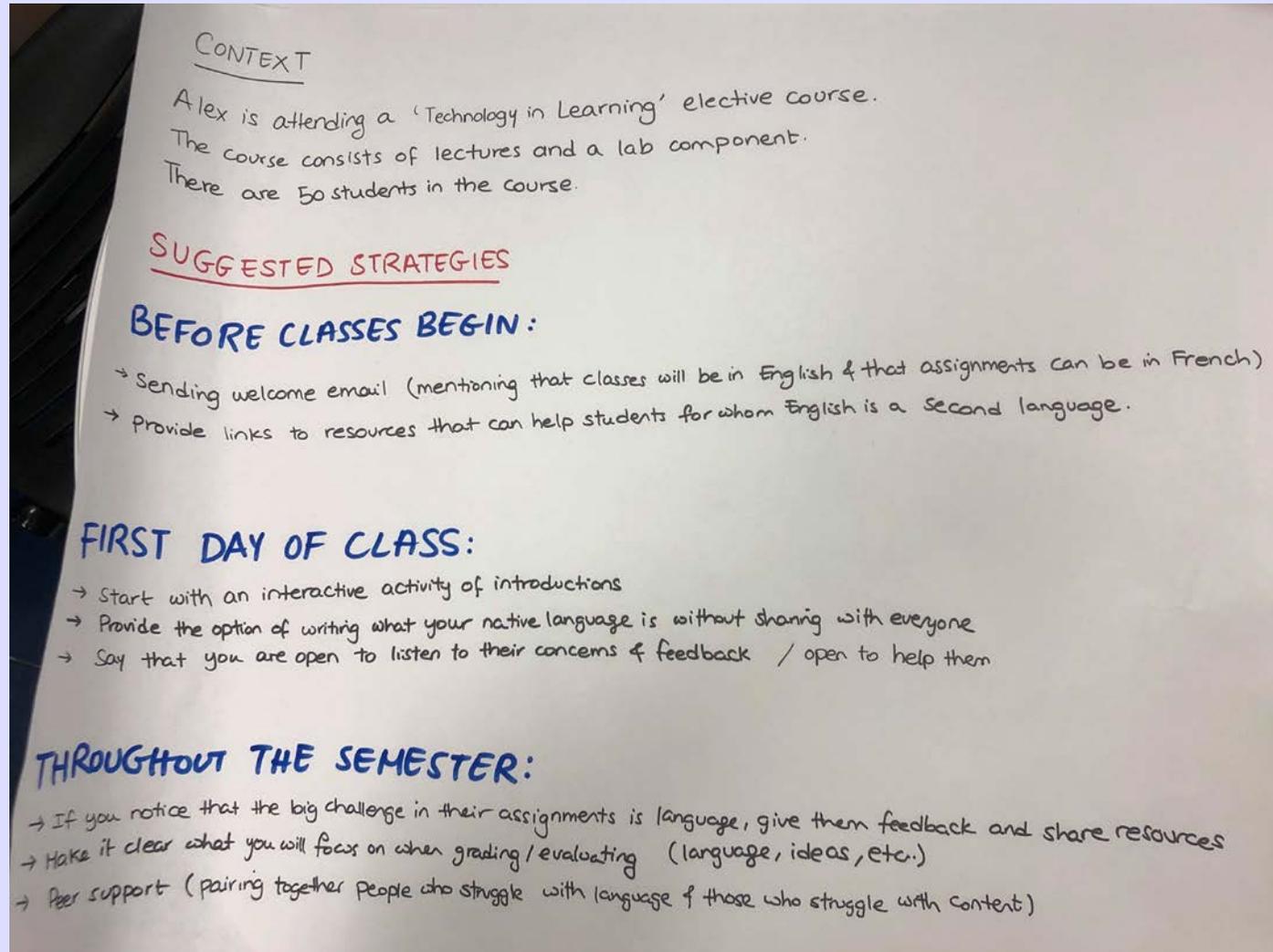
Revisit classroom guidelines frequently & update together as necessary.



Explore Strategies for Building Community



Explore Strategies for Building Community



Explore Strategies for Building Community

1. Review your scenario.
2. Consider the following question:

Using our working definition,
how can you build a community in the classroom
for the student(s)?



Reflections

- What thoughts, challenges, or questions came to light during this process?
- How was your understanding of community in the classroom changed since this session began?

Resources

- The Faculty of Arts Toolkit:
 - <https://mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/strategies/faculty-arts-toolkit>
- Marcy Slapcoff and Kira Smith
 - marcy.slapcoff@mcgill.ca and kira.smith@mcgill.ca
- Further reading:
 - Literature review available upon request

Resources by Request

Sourced post-session by attendees' request.

- Dornsife, R. (2014, January 30). Good Teaching as Vulnerable Teaching. Retrieved from <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/teaching-and-learning/good-teaching-vulnerable-teaching/>.
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