

Expanding the NEST*



A Menu of 25 Faculty Practices for Cultivating Student Success

This resource was created by CETL to support faculty as they cultivate student success at KSU. We suggest 25 easy to use, evidence-based practices that can make a big impact in each of the three categories below, selected from [KSU student responses to the National Survey of Student Engagement](#), plus one final invitation to take a deep dive. You are always welcome to attend one of our [events](#) to learn more or contact CETL for one-on-one [consultations](#) in any of this work.

*NEST = Nurturing Environments through Scholarly Teaching. Environments include, but are not limited to, physical classrooms, online spaces, office suites, events, etc.



Student-Faculty Interactions

1. Build rapport through icebreakers, small group activities, collaborative thinking, [tone](#), etc.
2. If shared, learn and use students' preferred names, pronunciations, and pronouns.
3. Develop or co-create guidelines or community agreements for interaction during class. Revisit them with students when needed and revise as appropriate.
4. Establish challenging but attainable expectations and frequently communicate your belief that all students can succeed.
5. Avoid generalizations that may exclude students (e.g., "when you go home for break," "if you have a child someday," "just walk over to my office," "it only costs \$xxx"). These phrases make implicit [assumptions](#) about students' physical ability, family structure, social identities, linguistic preferences, citizenship status, or economic means.
6. Encourage or require students to visit office hours early in the term. Use that time to ask about students' interests and experiences with course material.
7. Take a [training](#) on cultivating community from KSU's Division of Organizational Effectiveness, Leadership Development, and Inclusive Excellence.
8. Use KSU's [uHoo Learning Analytics](#) to monitor students' progress so you can take evidence-based actions to support them.



Effective Teaching Practices

9. Design your syllabus to focus on learning rather than content with this empirically validated [rubric](#).
10. Review your course to align learning outcomes, assessments, and instructional strategies.
11. Increase transparency of expectations by [TILTING](#) an assignment. Earn a KSU [microcredential](#).
12. Assess students' prior knowledge and skills to align instruction with strengths and needs and embrace variation. For instance, invite students to identify skills from different domains they could use in your course.
13. When content coverage is in tension with student learning needs, prioritize the latter (e.g., adjust pace, reduce information on slides, make course materials available, share essential study skill tips).

Faculty Success = Student Success

14. Highlight the diversity of contributors to and perspectives in your discipline (through authors you assign, research you highlight, guests you invite, etc.), and/or discuss historical reasons for limited access to the field and current efforts to change it.
15. Include student-generated content (e.g., projects and presentations, including exemplars from previous courses, with permission).
16. Use [Midterm Grades](#). Ensure your grading scheme reflects substantive student work by midterm.



Supportive Environments

17. Communicate interest in and share campus resources for your students' well-being (e.g., [Student Health Services](#), [Counseling and Psychological Services](#), [Student Disability Services](#), [Military and Veteran Services](#), [CARE Services](#)) and academic success (e.g., [KSU Writing Center](#), [Supplemental Instruction](#), the [SMART Center](#), [Career Planning and Development](#), [Student Athletes Success Services](#), and [Academic Advising](#)).
 18. Participate in the [Early Alert Initiative](#) and use the [Behavioral Response Team](#) reporting tool.
 19. Recognize that many students have legitimate reasons to occasionally be absent, turn in work late, leave class early, and design course policies that accommodate those contingencies.
 20. Be intentional about all aspects of [collaborative learning](#), from group formation and composition to duration, roles, process vs. deliverables, cohesiveness, individual vs. group accountability, providing feedback, and opportunities for reflection.
 21. Create intentional and [frequent](#) opportunities for students to offer [feedback](#) on their learning experience and to suggest ideas for improvement.
 22. Give students opportunities for reflection on how their own cultural identities relate to the content.
 23. Cultivate students' sense of agency by promoting a growth mindset and [metacognition](#). For instance, allow for productive trial and error (e.g., through low-stakes practice quizzes or drafts).
 24. Emphasize that risk, struggle, and failure are important parts of the learning process. Avoid talking about learning styles, a concept not supported by empirical evidence that does not reflect how people learn. Learn more about the [science of learning](#) and earn [CETL microcredentials](#).
25. **Take a deep dive.** Identify one aspect of your course to focus on and contact CETL for support (e.g., identifying the need, collecting data, designing interventions, [creating a SoTL](#) study for eventual publication, involving students as partners in this work).



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