

# Fostering Community and Engagement in Large Classroom Settings

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## Picturing the Classroom: The Dream

Small groups of students, laughing and working together.



## Picturing the Classroom: The Reality



Large classrooms with potentially hundreds of students in stadium-style seating.



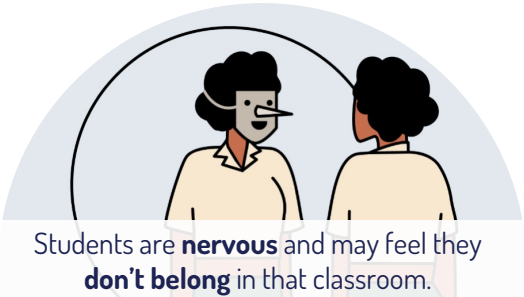
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## Professor's goal: Facilitate Learning

We encourage, challenge and help students grow.

Ideally, we have a classroom environment in which students want to **engage** and **feel comfortable** asking questions.




Students are **nervous** and may feel they **don't belong** in that classroom.

## What gets in the way of learning?


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X | 🔊 🔍

**Community:** a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.





**com·mu·ni·ty**

/kəˈmyoʊnədə/

noun

- a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.  
"the scientific community"
- a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.  
"the sense of community that organized religion can provide"

**Similar:** group section body company set circle clique coterie ▼

Feedback

Translations and more definitions ▼

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**Community**

acceptance open safety  
positive inclusion encourage togetherness  
trust belonging shared  
support membership  
connected  
engaged  
give helpful

**Creating a community with and for students:**

1. Establishing supportive classroom norms
2. Increasing student engagement during class
3. Activities to help break up the monotony

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## 1. Establishing supportive classroom norms

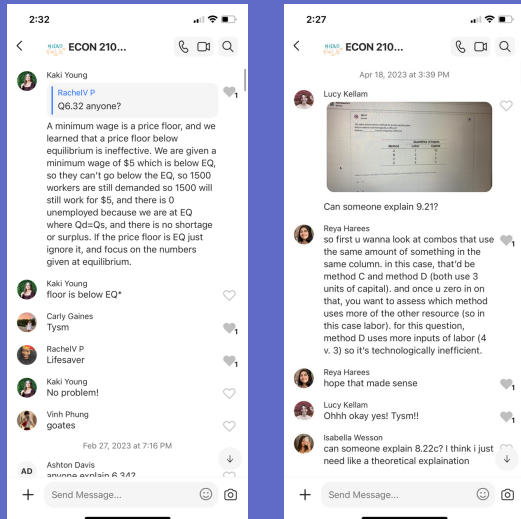
Create opportunities for students to feel connect to and supported by their classmates.

- **Syllabus Day:** invite former students to share tips and discuss challenges.
- **Student Exam Advice:**
  - *Leading up to the exam* have students discuss study tips briefly during class.
  - *After the exam* compile advice from students who (1) did well, or (2) showed improvement.
- **GroupMe:** YOU create the class GroupMe and discuss how it can be used in a *helpful* manner.

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## Helpful Student GroupMe posts:



## Request for student exam advice:

Hello all,

I am reaching out to congratulate you on a job well done on the first exam in ECON 210! This exam was *not* easy, yet you still managed to perform exceptionally well! I hope you keep up the great work :)

I also wanted to reach out on behalf of your fellow students and inquire about your preparation process for this first exam. **If you could please email me back with your top two or three pieces of advice/insights on how you studied for this exam** (just hit 'reply' --- NOT reply all).

If I hear back from enough students, then I will then compile these tips into a PDF document and share them with the rest of the class. These tips will be included in the document **anonymously**.

Again, GREAT work on this first exam!

Best,  
Dr. Taylor

Hello all,

I am reaching out to congratulate you on a job well done on the second exam! Your high score on this second exam shows that you really figured out how to approach and study this material. And I want to extend another congratulations for the marked improvement from the first to second exam.

I am also reaching out on behalf of your fellow students to see if you can share some tips/advice that might help them improve their future exam scores:

- How did you change your study method between exam 1 and exam 2?
- Was there something specific that really helped in your preparation for this exam?
- When did you start preparing for this second exam (how many days prior)?

If you choose to respond to any/all of these questions (or with any other tips you want to share), then I will copy and paste your responses **anonymously** into a PDF that will be shared with other students.


Best,  
Dr. Taylor

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## 2. Increasing student engagement during class

Remind students that they have an **active role** in their educational experience!

- **Crowd Crumple:** write down a question, crumple it, and throw it to another student.
- **The 10-minute rule:** a student voice should be heard *at least* once every 10 minutes.
  - Have students recap concepts, give examples, explain their answers, etc.
  - Cold-call students in a **low-stress** manner (tag-team/phone-a-friend). 
- **Slides designed for engagement:** use step-by-step, animated graphs; include practice questions for **think-pair-share**, and then **rinse-and-repeat** if student responses are mixed.

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### Practice: Cost-benefit analysis with sunk cost

Peter **lost his ticket** to go to a concert this Friday, which had cost him **\$50**. A **new ticket** will cost him **\$50**. If he doesn't go to the concert, then he will work at his part-time job where he can earn **\$40**.

Peter is debating whether to go to the concert. What is the **minimum** level of **benefits** that would make his decision to go rational?

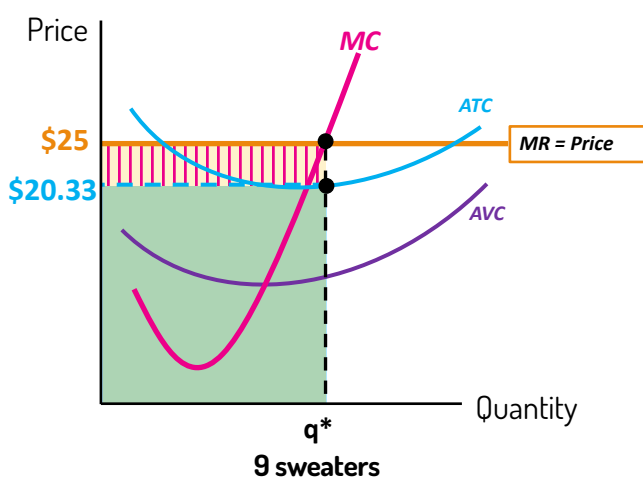
Peter's benefit of going to the concert would need to at least \$\_\_\_\_\_.

- A. \$40
- B. \$50
- C. \$90
- D. \$140

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### (A.) Economic Profit



1. Find  $q^*$

2. Find **TR**

3. Find **TC**

4. **Profit**

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### 3. Activities to help break up the monotony

Break up the potential monotony of lectures by including **small scale** and **quick** student-centered activities.

➤ **Price ceilings:** use **balloons** to help illustrate the concept of price ceilings.



➤ The classroom's ceiling prevents the balloon from rising higher just like a price ceiling prevents the price from going higher.

➤ **Opportunity cost:** have a student take a 'quick trip to the dollar store'.

➤ **The ambiguity of 'fairness':** the ultimatum game (see next slide).

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## The Ultimatum Game

This is a two-player game with real money at stake. The players do not know one another.

01



⋮



02

Player 1 is endowed with all the money, say \$100.

Player 1 proposes how to divide the money between themselves and player 2.

03



⋮



04

- If Player 2 **accepts** the proposal, then each player gets to keep the proposed shares of money.
- If Player 2 **rejects** the proposal, then neither player gets any money.

Güth, Werner, Rolf Schmittberger, and Bernd Schwarze. "An experimental analysis of ultimatum bargaining." *Journal of economic behavior & organization* 3.4 (1982): 367-388. <sup>12</sup>

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## Tips for building community in large classes



**Establishing supportive  
classroom norms**



**Increasing student  
engagement during class**



**Activities to help break  
up the monotony**

Remind students that **they shape the classroom community** with their words and actions. Their **insights**, **voices** and **actions** can help create a positive space for learning to take place.

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