

Pedagogy in the Pandemic

Student Panel Key Takeaways

The pandemic has generated a rapidly shifting context for teaching and learning. Educators from the Crown Institute and School of Education engaged in a series of conversations with six CU Boulder undergraduate students to explore the questions: How can we support students' learning and wellness? How can we cultivate engagement and community in our classes?

Here are a few of the key themes and ideas students shared.

Responsibilities Outside of School

Students feel supported when

- Faculty recognize that many students studying and attending class have to manage family responsibilities in addition to schoolwork. Students may not have a space to study without distractions.
- Faculty create routines around assignments. Many students are working to pay for school and have complicated schedules. Routines and predictable assignment schedules help busy students plan accordingly.

Learning & Classroom Structure

Students feel supported when

- They can participate in a variety of ways in class (e.g. different roles in a group, small group and pair conversations).
- Anonymous surveys throughout the semester ask for student input, followed by responsive uptake.
- Assignments are relevant to students' lives, utilise critical thought, connect to real life situations, and require real understanding of the content to complete.
- Learning objectives are made explicit.
- Assigned readings are discussed in class.

Opportunities to Connect

Students feel supported when

- Faculty ask them how they are doing. Students appreciate both the one-on-one check-ins as well as the whole class check-ins. This can be done via a poll or conversation.
- Current events are brought into the classroom. When upsetting local and global events are happening, it is supportive to have time to pause, discuss, and process.
- Connection building is incorporated into the class. For example: warm-up activities, sharing names at the start of each class, a class group on social media for students to join if they want, social activities outside of class, small group break out sessions to get to know each other, work in dyads, etc.

Equity & Inclusion

Students feel supported when

- Syllabi include standards around equity and inclusion beyond the "boilerplate" statement that is required by campus.
- Faculty acknowledge and use students' correct pronouns.
- The class develops shared norms.
- The instructional materials are explicit about equity, justice, and inclusion.

This is an unprecedented time for both faculty and students. We would love to hear from you about what is working well in your classrooms at crowninstitute@cuboulder.edu.