

## **Better\* Practices for Names and Pronouns in the Classroom**

Being a transgender student means that the simple act of being referred to can feel alienating and invalidating, limit classroom participation, and/or signal a lack of acceptance to trans and nonbinary students.

By adopting the following *low-effort but high-impact* practices, you can create a classroom environment that is accessible to trans and gender diverse students and conducive to active engagement and equal participation for all students. In addition, these practices facilitate easy name memorization, enable phonetic guides and nicknames, and build community amongst students.

These evidence-based guidelines were developed by trans students at Kenyon College, informed by their own lived experience, in consultation with their professors, and in dialogue with the extensive research on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for trans students in higher education.

Ultimately, the aim is to make using preferred names and pronouns an easy experience by making their explicit presence visually accessible in the classroom. Please reach out to [fishman1@kenyon.edu](mailto:fishman1@kenyon.edu) with any questions or ideas!

\*We've opted for the term better practices rather than best practices to acknowledge the need for further innovation and to keep the door open for future discussions.

*Endorsed By:*

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee

Ace Space and Aro Place  
Trans Book Club

<u>Practices</u>	<u>Benefits</u>
Introduce yourself with your pronouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Sets a classroom standard for pronoun respect (Emery 2021)</li><li>- Builds comfortability around the mention of pronouns for trans students</li></ul>
Ask for a round of introductions with first name, last name, and pronouns <i>if comfortable</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Prevents deadnaming trans students (Sinclair-Palm 2023)</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows questioning students to disclose when ready (Poore-Pariseau 2021)</li> <li>- Uses the preferred names for all students</li> <li>- Introduces students' pronouns into your and other students memory</li> </ul>
<p>During introductions, use last names to identify changes to first names and build a roster* that reflects the preferred names and pronouns of your students.</p> <p>*In addition to creating your own, the registrar shares a roster with updated preferred names and pronouns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows students to correct roster issues</li> <li>- Reaffirms standards for classroom</li> </ul>
<p>Consider sharing a google form* with students to collect names, pronouns, and any other information.</p> <p><a href="#">*We've created a template you can use here!</a> (Automatically makes you a copy)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allows another opportunity for students to correct roster issues</li> <li>- Allows students to privately communicate personal issues before they become problems</li> </ul>
<p><b>Provide students with time and materials to create name cards which prominently display* both their name and pronouns. Use these throughout the semester**</b></p> <p>*Ask your students to dedicate half the space for names, and half the space for pronouns, ensuring both are easily accessible.</p> <p>**Consistent use throughout the semester prompted by the professor is ideal, but not always necessary for smaller classes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Creates a constant visual reminder, without a need to vigorously memorize</b></li> <li>- <b>Allows everyone to easily double-check pronouns</b></li> <li>- <b>Facilitates easier classroom dialogue (Cooper 2017)</b></li> <li>- <b>Builds classroom community (Cooper 2017)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Options for Lecture Hall Modifications (forward facing classroom arrangements):</u></b></p>	
<p>After building a roster with preferred names and pronouns, share a Google Doc copy with students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students can refer to the list to check, and update when needed</li> </ul>
<p>If you use a seating chart, integrate updated roster information and share it with the class.</p> <p>(Do not include information other than a student's preferred name and pronouns on the version of the chart that you share with the class.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shares similar purpose to name cards, but overcomes logistical sight-line issues</li> <li>- Gives a reference point for pronouns when names are unknown</li> <li>- (less useful for frequently changing class arrangements)</li> </ul>

## Bibliography

Cooper, K. M., Haney, B., Krieg, A., & Brownell, S. E. (2017). What's in a Name? The Importance of Students Perceiving That an Instructor Knows Their Names in a High-Enrollment Biology Classroom. *CBE life sciences education*, 16(1), ar8. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.16-08-0265>

Emery NC, Bledsoe EK, Hasley AO, Eaton CD. (2021) Cultivating inclusive instructional and research environments in ecology and evolutionary science. *Ecol Evol*. 11: 1480–1491. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.7062>

Poore-Pariseau, C. (2021), Support pronoun disclosure when students are ready. *Campus Security Report*, 17: 7-8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casr.30751>

Sinclair-Palm, Julia & Kit Chokly (2023) 'It's a giant faux pas': exploring young trans people's beliefs about deadnaming and the term deadname, *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 20:2, 370-389, DOI: 10.1080/19361653.2022.2076182