



**Facilitator Guide: This I Believe**

Process	Description	Your Plan
<b>Transparency</b>	This practice is designed to enable students to share information about their background, their concerns and their hopes for the course with you, so that you have a better ability to fine tune the course to best meet their learning goals and to continue to build community. Research indicates that the act of reflecting on one’s values for their education increases motivation and engagement. This activity is being used by many educators across the country to learn about their students even before the semester begins.	
<b>Connection</b>	You could provide an example of how a previous instructor helped you better understand a complicated phenomenon by connecting it to a context that mattered or was relevant to you. Alternatively, you could provide an example (either from a past class where you have used this practice or a hypothetical case) in which information that a student shared in their reflection influenced how you presented a particular course topic or the examples that you used in your teaching of that topic.	
<b>Modeling</b>	This is a great opportunity for students to get to know you better and feel more comfortable sharing personal information about themselves with you. Prior to asking students to complete this essay, you could share your own This I Believe essay with your students. Alternatively,	

	if you have their consent to do so, you could share examples of past students' This I Believe essays with the class.	
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### **This I Believe Activity Action Steps:**

- Time Required: Anticipate about 5 minutes to read each essay.
- Ask students to write a brief (~500 word), first-person essay addressing some of the following prompts (adapted from the NPR This I Believe Essay Writing Guidelines):
  - What is an important value that you hold? Try to identify what you do believe, rather than what you do not.
  - What is a specific event or experience that happened in your past that contributed to the formulation of that important value in your life?
  - What is a time that your core belief was challenged or when it has changed?
  - How does this value or belief influence how you relate to other people in your life? To your approach to your education? To your goals for yourself?
- We encourage you to read each of these essays to get a better appreciation for the diverse range of individuals in your classroom and to consider how you might incorporate this understanding into your approach to teaching this semester.

### **References:**

Dewsbury, B. (2018). Teaching as an Act of Social Justice and Equity (No. 215).

<https://teachinginhighered.com/podcast/teaching-as-an-act-of-social-justice-and-equity/>

National Public Radio. This I Believe Essay Writing Guidelines. Retrieved from:

<https://thisibelieve.org/guidelines/>

Zimmerman, B. J. (2011). Motivational sources and outcomes of self-regulated learning and performance. In B.J. Zimmerman and D.H. Schunk (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation of learning and performance* (pp. 49–64). Routledge.