



# HSTEM

## Being Human in STEM

### Facilitator Guide: Humanizing the Professor

Process	Description	Your Plan
<b>Transparency</b>	Communicate to students that your class is a space that values who they are as whole people and learners, and that you want to get to know them, and for them to get to know you, as individuals. There is a substantial body of literature that suggests that establishing a sense of community and belonging in STEM classes contributes to improved student learning, improved student experience, and increased willingness on behalf of students to engage with beneficial learning supports, such as office hours. By sharing your STEM narrative, you are working to build that sense of community.	
<b>Connection</b>	Share a time when either learning about an aspect of a professor as an individual increased your sense of connection or willingness to seek support from that person, or when you were better able to navigate the demands of academia because you had the support of someone who recognized the complex nature of your life.	
<b>Modeling</b>	While you will not be asking students to engage in this activity, we encourage you to invite other instructional team members (e.g., co-facilitators, lab instructors, teaching assistants) to share their own STEM journeys with students alongside your own. To increase comfort in doing so, we recommend a	

	<p>preparatory meeting with the full instructional team prior to the class session in which you will implement this activity. During that meeting, you can share your own STEM journey with them. In class, you can share your STEM narrative with the class prior to inviting other instructional team members to do the same.</p>	
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### Humanize the Professor Action Steps:

- In the first days of class, identify 5-10 minutes to allocate to sharing your HSTEM story with students. Often instructors will couple this activity with the presentation of the syllabus or other mechanisms of providing students with an overview of the course. Allocate additional time to this activity if other instructional team members will also participate.
- Discussion prompts to help guide you in your STEM narrative construction:
  - What do you remember as some of your first points of excitement about STEM? This may be an observation of a phenomena in the natural world that you wanted to know more about as a child (e.g., plants, the phases of the moon, a book or documentary), encounters with a scientist that inspired you, or anything else.
  - What challenges have you encountered along your journey to becoming a scientist? How did you strive to overcome these challenges, and who or what supported you in that process?
  - What do you love about your discipline or your research area?
  - Where have you been lucky in your journey? What serendipitous events, unanticipated setbacks or opportunities, or other unplanned events shaped the path that your journey in STEM has taken?

### References:

- Freeman, T. M., Anderman, L. H., & Jensen, J. M. (2007). Sense of Belonging in College Freshmen at the Classroom and Campus Levels. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 75(3), 203–220. <https://doi.org/10.3200/JEXE.75.3.203-220>
- Trujillo, G., & Tanner, K. D. (2014). Considering the Role of Affect in Learning: Monitoring Students’ Self-Efficacy, Sense of Belonging, and Science Identity. *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 13(1), 6–15. <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.13-12-0241>