The latest idea for increasing student engagement at MCC comes from Mary Felt (Language & Literature Department). Mary uses this simple and fun exercise as an icebreaker during the first week of class:

First day activity, the first few minutes of class.

Before I do anything I ask the students to take out a piece of paper and something to write with. I tell them they will be taking a quiz. I then tell them that this will be the hardest test they will take all semester because they will not know the answers. I also tell them that it is the easiest quiz because it will not be graded and in no way shape or form will affect their grade.

I then tell them that they will be taking a quiz about me. They will need to answer 10 questions about me with their best guesses.

I say “the first question is…how old am I?” I then remind them that the quiz will not affect their grade in any way!

The following are questions that I have asked in the past:

- What is my marital status?
- Do I have kids?
- Do I have pets?
- What kind of car do I drive?
- Do I smoke?
- What is my pet peeve?
- What kind of music do I like?
- What kind of TV programs do I watch?
- What do I do for fun?
- Where was I born and raised?
- What time do I go to bed at night?

Really you can ask anything you would be comfortable revealing – I end with “In one word describe me”

I assure them that I have heard it all so be honest. I then of course reveal all the answers one by one and describe my family, likes, etc along the way. They get to know me a bit more both by the facts that are revealed and by the nature of this exercise.

This whole exercise can take up to a half hour depending how willing you are to talk about yourself. You could of course ask less than 10 questions to shorten the exercise as well.