

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN FOR ENGAGING YOUR STUDENTS

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ENGAGEMENT?

- Is complex.
 - There is no one golden pathway to engagement.
- Success relies on understanding your context.
- To be engaged students need cognitive investment in, active participation in and emotional commitment to their learning.
 - engaged learners are deep learners;
 - teaching for engagement means teachers are learner- and learning-centred;
 - teaching that engages enables students to construct their own knowledge;
 - teachers and teaching have a big influence on how well learners engage.

PLANNING FOR ENGAGEMENT: FOUNDATIONS

- Who are your students?
- What do they want to achieve?
 - Motivation
 - Competence, autonomy, relatedness.
 - How can you support what they want to achieve?
- How do you want to teach?
 - engaging teachers facilitate:
 - positive student-teacher relationships;
 - co-operation among students;
 - active learning;
 - prompt feedback on student work;
 - sufficient time on task;
 - high expectations of student capabilities;
 - respect for diverse talents and ways of learning
- What external factors influence your students?

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Plan to enhance students' self-belief**
 - recognise and demonstrate, in word and deed, that you appreciate your students' strengths;
 - Teach so that learning activities and assessment methods enable students to use and develop their particular strengths;
 - provide feedback that enables students to recognise and develop their strengths.
 - Commend, recommend, commend

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Plan for students to work autonomously, enjoy learning relationships with others and feel they are competent to achieve their own objectives.**
 - Plan tasks that enable students feel competent - not glossing over weaknesses, but framing tasks in ways that will build on strengths;
 - provide timely and specific feedback that reinforces strengths and provides guidance on how to address weaknesses;
 - Plan group activities that encourage interdependence, a sense of belonging, as well as room for an individual to work autonomously.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Plan to recognise that teaching and teachers are central to engagement**
 - nurture positive student-teacher relationships;
 - foster co-operation among students;
 - promote active learning;
 - provide prompt, constructive feedback on student work;
 - ensure students have sufficient time to do set tasks;
 - have high expectations of students;
 - respect diverse talents and ways of learning.
 - *Chickering and Gamson (1987)*

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Plan learning that is active and collaborative, and fosters learning relationships.**
 - organise and support group activities in which students solve authentic problems;
 - learn more about learning communities and create them with your students;
 - form smaller groups and learning communities within your large classes.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- ◉ ***Plan learning experiences that are challenging, enriching and extend academic and work abilities***
 - tell your students of your high expectations from the very beginning;
 - expect students to put sufficient time into tasks to complete them satisfactorily;
 - support students when they get into academic trouble or when they want help to extend themselves;
 - encourage students to share the results of their learning.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- ◎ **Plan for a classroom environment that is welcoming to students from diverse backgrounds**
 - find out something about the learning needs of ‘non-traditional’ students and develop ways of meeting at least some of those needs;
 - develop knowledge of and skills in strengths-based teaching (Ungar, 2004).
 - Avoid deficit or “gap” thinking.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- ◎ **Plan to use available support services to students**
 - be familiar with the support services your institution offers students;
 - plan ways in which you can organise support services for the students you teach.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Adapt to changing student expectations**
 - Recognise that many students are employed, have families or community commitments. Be flexible;
 - Recognise that many students, particularly ‘non-traditional’ ones, have family and community responsibilities. Be flexible;
 - In being flexible, be very clear about your expectations. Engagement is not for negotiation, only the way that engagement takes place.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- Plan for active citizenship by encouraging students to
 - make legitimate claims about knowledge in a world of uncertainty and negotiate challenges to such claims;
 - act constructively in the world by identifying ethical and political issues affecting their subject;
 - become aware of themselves and their potential to effect change in a world that is open, fluid and contested.

PLANNING FOR ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

- **Plan for non traditional students to develop their social and cultural capital**
 - frequently acknowledge the strengths non-traditional learners bring to learning;
 - cater, at least some of the time, to attitudes, expectations, behaviours and approaches to learning valued by students from diverse cultures with diverse knowledge and skills;
 - give ‘non-traditional’ as well as traditional students a window for sharing their ideas about what makes them similar to and different from others;
 - maintain standards, but find new, appropriate ways for ‘non-traditional’ students to achieve them.

PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

- ◉ Overwhelmed?
- ◉ No need. Appreciate the possibilities open to you.
 - Which of these ideas are already in your practice kit?
 - Which of these ideas not currently in your kit are feasible to develop?
 - Choose one or two to develop and practice.
- ◉ Select one or two that suit **you**, your class, your subject, the environment you work in.
- ◉ Good luck.