

The “New” Student Engagement Challenge

Triage Strategies

1. **Double-down on scaffolding.** Andragogy suggests we normally trust students to do the work when convenient for them. Shift the “trust seesaw” during this time and break major assignments into micro-assignments with smaller grades, leaving no room for procrastination.
2. **Reduce content.** Condense the reading, provide summaries, or even link to existing videos rather than require reading.
3. **Allow one do-over.** This could take the form of a re-do on a test or paper.
4. **Attendance policies that allow for SOME absences.** Rather than adjudicate which absences count as “authorized,” enact a policy allowing two (or whatever) absences with no explanation, but also no excuses or authorized absences beyond those two.
5. **Craft “just hard enough” make-up policies.** The make-up assignment or test shouldn’t be easier than the original, but neither should it be punishingly or tremendously harder.
6. **Flexible grading/testing.** Consider allowing re-testing, with a final grade that blends the two efforts appropriately, without undue inflation. Or provide an option to skip an assignment, instead duplicating a grade from an earlier/related assignment.
7. **Refer to UCF Cares when appropriate.** It’s generally best to inform the student of the referral before it’s made, but referrals can be made without this step.

Academic Development

8. **Active learning based on deliberate practice.** Effortlessness associated with listening to well-presented lectures misleads students into thinking that they are learning. Pre-class readings combined with structured, in-class activities and mock exams create opportunities for deliberate practice, the most effective technique for learning. Research suggests that aiming for 70% of class time for active learning is required to achieve significant effects.
9. **Active learning with an equity lens.** Synergy between a culture of inclusion and belonging with a practice-based curriculum significantly reduces performance gaps among minoritized students.
10. **Incorporate team-based learning.** TBL provides structured practice, balances individual with team accountability, achieves high content learning effects, develops students’ communication and rational thinking skills, and promotes inclusion and interdependence.
11. **Adopt a specifications-grading system.** Specs grading is like a one-level, unidimensional rubric directly aligned with student learning outcomes that is graded pass/fail. There is no possibility for partial credit nor allowance for last-minute sloppy work. Tokens can be offered at the beginning of the semester to cover a few missed assignments or fails. SG motivates students, reduces grade-grubbing, and ensures competency development.
12. **Focus on academic metacognition:** include instruction on how to learn your subject; require assignment wrappers; address gaps in prior knowledge; have students set learning goals and track their progress; use and assign visual aids like mindmaps, charts, or graphical organization models.

13. **Appreciative inquiry, positive pedagogy, and strengths-building.** Consider an anti-deficit framework. Help students identify their strengths; encourage them to follow interesting questions; include positive examples; create an atmosphere of sharing academic success strategies and stories.
14. **Strive for a repertoire of teaching moves rather than a single recipe.** Improving exam scores, lowering failure rates for all students, and reducing achievement gaps requires long-term commitment and opportunities for teacher-practice. Scaffolding towards highly structured, evidence-based practices may temporarily reduce student learning (as well as SPI scores) while you work to improve your teaching. About a third of instructors who implement an evidence-based practice give up after one attempt. The situational factors of subject matter, curriculum level, student readiness, class size and modality, and instructor profile all work to constrain implementation of a single formula.

Personal Development

15. **Encourage a growth mindset.** When the grading structure AND the instructor's demeanor/commentary treat failure as an expected part of the learning process, students are less likely to give up. Teaching growth mindset as a discrete subject also helps.
16. **Increase metacognition.** Students who reflect on what they learned, how they learned it, which emotions were part of the process, and what they could do differently enjoy learning gains.
17. **Dramatically increase relatedness.** Motivation is partly dependent on relatedness, a concept that likely became greatly diminished for most students during remote teaching. Use groups frequently, both informally and for graded assignments. Reward metacognition with grades for their reflections on personal connection to the course content.
18. **Make dispositions and affective values discrete teaching goals.** Attitudes and dispositions are crucial for interviewing and hiring, but often are assumed to be in healthy working balance among college students. Instead of assuming, create assignments that force students to confront, probe, and reflect on their values. Consider also using the Bloom's Affective Domain features (attached) to address responding, organizing, and characterizing.

Bloom's Taxonomy – Affective Domain

Characterising: The individual is characterised by the values they have internalised and organised, such that the values become a system of attitudes and tendencies that control much of their behaviour. This internalisation and organisation of values also results in the integration of beliefs, ideas and attitudes into a total philosophy or world view.

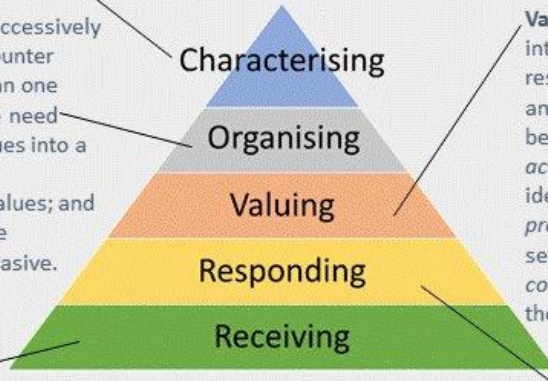
Organising: As the learner successively internalises values, they encounter situations for which more than one value is relevant. As such, the need arises to: (i) organise the values into a system; (ii) determine the interrelationships between values; and (iii) establish which values are dominant and which are pervasive.

Receiving: A continuum from 'passively receiving information', to 'being tolerant/neutral towards receiving information', to 'choosing to direct attention towards the information'.

Responding: The individual 'actively attends' and 'makes a response', but has not fully accepted the necessity to do so. This may even extend to 'voluntary involvement' or, further still, 'seeking out and engaging with learning to gain satisfaction', which represents the emergence of an emotional response to learning.

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Based on: 'Krathwohl, D.R., Bloom, B.S., Masia, B.B., 1964. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Handbook II: Affective Domain*. Longman, London.'



Valuing: This level is embodied by the internalisation of a set of values, resulting in active control of behaviour and motivation to act out the behaviour. It is further characterised by: *acceptance* (a willingness to be identified with the valued thing); *preference* (a willingness to pursue and seek out the valued thing); and *commitment* (a willingness to further the valued thing in some way).

This domain focuses on the ways in which we handle all things related to emotions, such as feelings, values, appreciation, enthusiasms, motivations, and attitudes (Clark, 2015).

From lowest to highest, with examples included, the five levels are:

1. **Receiving:** basic awareness → Example: Listening and remembering the names of your classmates when you meet them on the first day of school.
2. **Responding:** active participation and reacting to stimuli, with a focus on responding → Example: Participating in a class discussion.
3. **Valuing:** the value that is associated with a particular object or piece of information, ranging from basic acceptance to complex commitment; values are somehow related to prior knowledge and experience → Example: Valuing diversity and being sensitive to other people's backgrounds and beliefs.
4. **Organizing:** sorting values into priorities and creating a unique value system with an emphasis on comparing and relating previously identified values → Example: Accepting professional ethical standards.
5. **Characterizing:** building abstract knowledge based on knowledge acquired from the four previous tiers; value system is now in full effect and controls the way you behave → Example: Displaying a professional commitment to ethical standards in the workplace.

Source: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/blooms-taxonomy.html> - accessed 6/28/2022

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