MAXIMISING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Debbie’s Learning Set A
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SESSION PLAN

(1) Explore student engagement
   (a) Context, definitions, policy
   (b) Understand some of the main theoretical perspectives

(2) Increase student engagement
   (a) Consider tools and techniques to increase student engagement
   (b) Discuss the merits of different teaching approaches

(3) Reflect on our practice and the importance of engagement

(4) Concluding remarks
LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

(1) Define student engagement

(2) Have a general understanding of the context and the theories of engagement

(4) Acquire practical tools to enhance their teaching/engagement practice(s)

(5) Reflect on their engagement practice(s)
ACTIVITY / BRAINSTORM

What is your best and worst student engagement experience?

Group A [Teacher perspective]  Group B [Student perspective]

(1) Discuss your best and worst experience of engagement in a lecture or seminar

(2) Choose 1 best and 1 worst experience to discuss with the class

(3) Explain why
ENGAGEMENT MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

“Learning begins with student engagement...” (Shulman 2005: 38)

- Wide range of definitions.....

- ‘Engagement is the **degree to which learners are engaged with their educational activities** and is **positively linked to a host of desired outcomes**, including **high grades**, **student satisfaction**, and **perseverance** ‘(Chen *et al.* 2008: 76).

- ‘The greater the student’s **involvement or engagement** in academic work or in the academic experience of college, the **greater** his or her **level of knowledge acquisition and general cognitive development**’ (Pascarella and Terenzini 1991: 16).

- ‘Student engagement is simply characterised as **participation** in educationally effective practices, both **inside and outside the classroom**, which leads to a range of measurable outcomes’ (Inceoglu and Shukla 2011: 1).
FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Reasons for student non-engagement (Tinto 1993 cited in Bailey 2010: 6)
- Academic difficulties (35%)
- Adjustment difficulties (social maturity)
- Unclear, narrow, changing goals
- Weak and external commitment to HE financial inadequacies
- Lack of ‘fit’ (social or academic)
- Isolation (particularly in first year)

Drivers of student engagement (Baily 2010: 6)
- Academic integration
- ‘Settling in’
- Challenging, rewarding, and consistent goals (‘satisfaction’?)
- Commitment to HE
- Sufficient finance
- ‘Fitting in’
- Having friends/being known

Student engagement drivers
- Challenging, rewarding, and consistent goals (‘satisfaction’?)
- Integration (academic and social, ‘fitting in’, having friends/being known)

Employee engagement drivers
- Job satisfaction (academic integration)
- Feeling valued and involved (social integration)
ENGAGEMENT AND THE POLICY LANDSCAPE

National
- Government Retention Guidelines (NAO 2007)

Professional
- UKHEA: Retention & Success (Thomas 2012)
- UKPSF
  > A2 Teach & Support Learning
  > A3 Assess & Give Feedback
  > V1 Respect Learners
  > V2 Promote participation & quality of opportunity
  > V4 Acknowledge the wider context & implications for professional practice (UKHEA 2012)

Institutional
- Strategy for Enhancing the Student Experience (Rafferty 2010)
- Graduate Attributes
  > Academic Literacy, Critical Self-awareness & Global Citizenship (OCSLD 2010)

Benchmarking
- The National Student Survey
- Module Evaluation & Review
- Brookes Student Retention KPI (OBU 2012)

and Brookes Marketing messages…
ENGAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Teaching excellence

Over the last 25 years Oxford Brookes has developed a reputation for the outstanding quality of our teaching, which has been assessed by the Quality Assurance Agency as excellent in subjects than any other modern university.

Our teaching is underpinned by excellent research, and we build even stronger links between course content and teaching. Our teaching methods may differ from the way you are taught in your own country. At Brookes our teaching methods include:

- Lectures - a formal introduction to, and explanation of, new subjects.
- Seminars - the chance to discuss lectures in more detail in small groups.

Brookes remains at the forefront of developments in teaching and are able to offer our students the best possible learning experience. Over 19,000 students and nearly 700 staff currently use eLearning, the University’s existing integrated e-learning network, to expand the education and lifelong learning. Brookes is committed to expanding the taught courses we postgraduate.

To expand access to study at Oxford Brookes, we are committed to developing our distance learning for undergraduate, postgraduate and professional programmes.
ENGAGEMENT THEORIES

HOLISTIC ENGAGEMENT

Kahu (2013: 766)
TEACHING TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- **Active learning**
  > Engaging students in problem or practice-based learning drawing on examples/real world applicability
  > Using **problem-based learning** for assessment (Wood 2004)
  > Student lead seminars

- **Collaborative learning** and small group teaching
  > Allows students to share their own experiences, both in the classroom and beyond
  > Staff-student relationship
  > Group work (poster tours, pyramids, rounds, syndicates, fishbowls, stimulus material)
  > Encourage students to take responsibility

TEACHING TECHNIQUES USED TO INCREASE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (CONT.)

- **Enthusiastic** and knowledgeable lecturers
- Offering a **range of diverse learning experiences**
  > Incorporating videos and regular self and peer evaluation
  > Using a virtual learning environment (VLE) to make teaching materials and its content relevant to modern-day life (Holmes 2014)

MERITS (M) AND CHALLENGES (C) OF DIFFERENT TEACHING TECHNIQUES

- **Active learning**
  M: High engagement, pragmatic skills, real world/evidence-based applicability, problem/practice base learning, student retention, reciprocal process
  C: Getting people engaged, burn out, reciprocal process

- **Collaborative learning** (mature learning)
  M: sharing learning/experiences, confidence building, inclusion, staff-student relationship, instant staff/peer feedback, taking ownership
  C: Disengaged student(s), group work conflict, different agendas/goals

- **Enthusiastic and knowledgeable** lectures
  M: Link to active and collaborative learning, shared responsibility (preparation-participation)
  C: Maintaining your/their level of enthusiasm, problem of disengagement

- **Offering a range of diverse learning experiences**
  M: variety, trial-error, pick and mix, meeting needs of different learning/teaching styles, maintain student/teacher engagement
  C: Disengagement, no satisfaction guarantee, effort not always reflected in student survey
STAFF / STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

- Staff **know students**, including their names, and view them **as individuals**
- Staff **appear interested in students** and their progress, not just their problems
- Staff are **available and respond** to students contact in an appropriate and timely way
- Staff **value the input** of students and respect them, irrespective of diversity and difference
- Students are **able to approach** staff for support
- Students want relationships with staff that are ‘**less formal, like a mentor**’ (65%) rather than formal ‘like a teacher’ (14%) (Thomas, 2012)
ACTIVITY: REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

(1) What is **one practice** you will change and/or incorporate in your future teaching practice to engage students?

(2) **Why?**

(3) **Share ideas**, experiences, and results in forum
CONCLUDING REMARKS

- Rather than pulling rabbits out of hats, engaging teaching is about creativity, persona, projecting a positive state of mind, professional values and integrity.

- Active and collaborative learning is an important tool in enhancing and facilitating student engagement and learning via the use of various teaching techniques (Auken 2011).


- Engagement tools are not a ‘one size fits all’; rather these are to be tailored and adapted based on student needs, priorities, and feedback exchange.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND PARTICIPATION!

ANY QUESTIONS?
REFERENCES


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