How to Maximize Student Success in the Classroom

One Perspective
Knowing Our Student Population

- What do we already know?
- What life challenges can we anticipate some students might bring with them?
- How prepared are you to deal with the ways these challenges play out in the classroom?
- What would you most like to get from our time together?
Get to Know Your Students

- Pay attention to the temperaments of students
  - Look for potential challenges
  - *Don’t forget to look for areas of strength and resilience*
  - Listen to understand – our students face many challenges
  - Address them calmly and with care - immediately

- Pay attention to your own internal reactions to different students
  - Practice being curious rather than judgmental

Create a tolerant and safe classroom environment that supports mutual respect
Engaged Students Feel They Belong
Helping Students Feel They Belong

What do you already do to engage students in the first class?

- Being warm and welcoming goes a long way!
- Help students to connect to one another with a fun activity.
  - Sets the stage for future connections
- Draw out student responses to activity
- Be mindful of dynamics
  - Connecting is easy for some and scary for others

How do you continue to nurture this engagement?
Collaboration?

Working with others to achieve a shared goal.
Why Collaboration Works

- Connection is an essential human need
Imagination

Help students connect what they will learn in your class with their lives outside of class.
Seating Dynamics
First Class ‘Active Learning’ Activity

Small Groups: Ask students what they hope to gain from the class

Students in this class can help me succeed when they. . .

I am most likely to participate in this class when. . .

Something that makes it hard to learn in a class. . .

Something that makes it easy to learn in a class. . .

I learn best in classes when my instructor. . .

One thing I can do to help other students succeed in this class. . .

One thing I can do to help myself succeed. . .

Have groups report out

Take notes on board to help draw out class norms

Invite students to honor the norms and to help classmates to do so as well
Proactive Classroom Dynamics

Encourage Collaborative Learning

- Easy for some and almost impossible for others
  - What makes the difference?
- Discuss the diversity of cultural and learning preferences
  - This can head off those who may monopolize conversations
  - Encourage those who are shy to push themselves a bit
- Connect course content with the “rest of life”
  - Real life application

Retention research – the more students are engaged & connected to one another, the better their retention and outcomes
Challenges

What challenges you?
What do you know doesn't work?
What do you already do that works?
When It Gets Challenging

Address it right away – decide when, where and how

- Begin feedback with reassurance that you support their success before sharing your concern (+intent)
  - Try to bring them in as an ally
    - “I’d like to ask for your help. . . “
  - Base your feedback on the specifics of what you observed and the impact you felt/saw
  - Relate it to the established classroom norms
  - Do not stack issues!

- Ask for their response – acknowledge their concerns
  - Collaborate on a solution
Criteria for Effective Feedback

Always remain respectful and clear in your message

Specific  
Immediate  
Behavioral  
Descriptive

not
not
not
not

General  
Delayed   
Inferential 
Evaluative

Try to elicit their cooperation – what does this require of you?

Be specific about expectations and possible consequences
Active Listening

- Give the student your full attention
  - Remain calm and attentive
- Allow for silence or pauses
- DO NOT INTERRUPT!
- Watch non-verbal cues
- Concentrate on what is being said and let them know you heard their perspective
  - You do not have to agree!
Bottom Line

- Time your feedback appropriately
  - If you are angry, wait or calm yourself first
- Keep your personal feelings out of it
  - Avoid defending or over explaining
- Monitor your reactions throughout
- Don’t overload the student