

Improving Student Engagement

STUDENT ATTITUDE	DOES THE STUDENT VALUE THE TASK OR CONTENT?	IS THE STUDENT CONFIDENT WORK WILL GET DESIRED GRADE?	HOW DOES THE STUDENT PERCEIVE THE INSTRUCTOR OR CLASSMATES?	STUDENT BEHAVIOR
Angry	little care	little confidence	unsupportive	abrasive, disgruntled, prone to outbursts
Apathetic	little care	little confidence	supportive	general passivity
Distracted	little care	confident	either supportive or unsupportive	daydreams, plays on phones, engages others off-topic, does minimum work
Hopelessness	care	little confidence	unsupportive	acts helpless
Fragile	care	little confidence	supportive	pretends to understand, waits for others to answer
Defiant	care	confident	unsupportive	trying to prove you wrong
Motivated	care	confident	supportive	focused on task or content

Ambrose, S.A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M., Lovett, M.C., & Norman, M.K. *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

VALUE

If students do not care, you can design activities that enable them to acquire pleasure from performing the task, like a game. You can help them find satisfaction from attaining a goal, for instance, via badges, stickers, celebratory titles, or ceremonies. You can have them visualize how attaining a goal in the course is instrumental to achieving other goals within the course, curriculum, or life, perhaps by their creating a concept map that connects what they're doing to a bigger picture.

CONFIDENCE

If students have little confidence their work will get the grade they desire, you can provide them with clear grading rubrics, deliver instructions in writing so they can reread them, provide examples of a quality assignment and an assignment of lesser quality and ask the students to discuss the differences, introduce instructions for complex tasks with a Q&A session, and help students recognize and celebrate their successes.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

To feel supported, students need to see the instructor as approachable, believe their classmates are willing to help, and trust the instructor and their classmates are open to diverse experiences, perspectives, and identities. Individualized attention, ice-breakers, paired and small-group activities, conduct policies in the syllabus and on activity sheets, and rephrasing students' insensitive comments into a more neutral tone can help create a safe learning environment.