

Engaging Pedagogies: The Pathway to Effective and Efficient Learning in the First Year of Higher Education

Rachael Field
Faculty of Law
QUT



What are engaging pedagogies?

- Ways of teaching that:
 - Generate high quality learning because they:
 - Encourage students to be active learners
 - Persuade students to be involved learners
 - Harness student interest
 - Channel student energy
 - Promote understanding
 - Motivate students to learn
 - Discourage passive learning

Practically what does this involve?

- Creating learning environments in which students are actively:
 - analysing,
 - synthesising,
 - evaluating and
 - applying.
- Creating learning environments that are:
 - student-centred,
 - outcome-focused and that
 - encourage high level cognitive connection and
 - promote student self-sufficiency.

A Framework for Thinking About the Achievement of Engagement

- Am I *motivating* my students to learn?
- Am I supporting my students in *active learning*?
- Do my students have a *learning environment* that promotes and supports engagement?

Applying the Framework

Examples from Fellowship Case Studies

- Motivation:
 - **authentic assessment design** that is focussed on assessing *for* learning as opposed to assessment *of* learning,
 - giving explicit attention to **feedback**,
 - creating a **learning community** which **integrates** campus staff into the academic program,
 - **stimulating** students by using **creative content** and **imaginative learning activities** eg virtual spaces,
 - promote high levels of **enquiry, analysis and creativity** through **interdisciplinary curriculum design**,
 - harnessing the **positivity** of **learning by experience**.

Applying the Framework

Examples from Fellowship Case Studies

- Active Learning
 - **case study** approaches to learning design,
 - strategic use of **group** and **collaborative** learning,
 - ensuring access to some **small learning environments** - eg small group tutorials, study groups and working with a partner,
 - ensuring a focus on **participation** – eg buzz groups, debates, role plays, discussion, mapping, and online activities,
 - promoting **social engagement** for students through **discursive activity**,
 - supporting **collaborative learning** and **peer to peer activity** through **structured approaches**,
 - encouraging students to **challenge** and **question**.

Applying the Framework

Examples from Fellowship Case Studies

- Learning environment – creating a positive environment that supports engagement by:
 - creating a **dedicated common room** and **social space** for first year students containing computers, comfortable lounges, notice boards, access to tutor assistance,
 - **explicitly** dealing with **transition** issues eg scaffolding foundational skills, connecting with the discipline’s real world, aligning learning outcomes, teaching settings and assessment practices constructively across all FY subjects,
 - promoting **staff-student interaction** eg course coordinators playing a central anchor and support role,
 - **peer mentors**
 - **orientation** processes that maximise student interactions and **minimise the amount of talking ‘at’ students**,
 - **integrating University support services** into the Faculty or School context,

Applying the Framework

Another example using blended design

- Blended models – integrating online and f2f teaching delivery - can also motivate, encourage activity, and provide a positive learning environment.
- In FY contexts the model can effectively be focussed on large group lectures with 2 learning facilitators.
- To read more see:
 - R Field and B Kent, FYHE Conference Proceedings 2006.
 - R Field, ASCILITE Conference Proceedings 2005.
 - S Kift and R Field, 2006 OLT Conference Proceedings:

The Engagement Principal

- Students must be engaged as learners if they are to have a successful university experience.

