Empowering Delivery: Empower students to take responsibility for their own success

How teachers act, talk and interact with students makes an enormous difference to student confidence, motivation, resilience, and ability to adapt and change beliefs, understandings and learning processes.

Why

These personal characteristics help students to persist and make it. You can empower students to take control and to take responsibility for their own success.

How

There are several ways you can empower students to take responsibility.
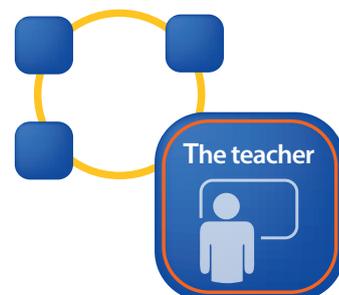
Develop positive relationships with students

According to Martin and Dowson (2009) relationships with students sit at the core of successful teaching. Positive relationships start from staff being enthusiastic and actively present in the students learning: Teaching, listening, guiding, redirecting and encouraging students to be successful independent proactive learners. This presence acts as a positive force when staff:

- Truly hear what students have to say and engage meaningfully
- Show that they like, respect, value and care about the students
- Are positive and encouraging in their communication with students
- Believe in students capabilities and show trust that the students can do it
- Get to know the students – where they are from, their aspirations and their experiences
- Draw and build on what they know about the students and weave this into their instruction.(Alderman, 2013; Martin & Dowson, 2009).

Positive relationships, coupled with an enthusiastic teacher, motivate students to become engaged in the class and the curriculum.

Help students gain a sense of control

Feeling positive and engaged is a good start but it is also important that students see that academic success comes through their own efforts and application. You can empower students to take responsibility for their own success by inviting them into an intellectual community in which you will be supporting their independence and responsibility. Bain (2004) notes that the most successful university teachers invite students in and treat them with courtesy and dignity while holding them accountable for their own performance. You can help students to gain a strong sense of control of their own achievements by:

- Incorporating student initiated and managed activities
- Providing students with some choice in assignments, activities, group collaboration etc.
- Giving students room to make decisions about their learning
- Providing opportunities for sharing useful strategies
  - What you or your tutors have done that helped your own learning, remembering, analysing, and data collection in similar tasks and situations
  - What other students are doing that helps them to learn, manage competing demands, and navigate the university system etc.

These types of actions respectfully place control for achievement with the students, and help develop trust and empower relationships. When students realise that they can do this, and clearly understand the link between effort and success, their confidence, application and effort grows. You play an important role in helping students to come to this realisation.

Provide opportunities for everyone to learn deeply in the class

Part of developing a sense of control is letting the students know about the opportunities you will be providing for everyone in the class. Invite students to take advantage and explain how you will be creating opportunities for everyone to think and learn deeply about the curriculum in the face-to-face and online classes. Then make sure that you and your tutors follow through. Students are aware when members of the class are treated differently and some get the harder questions while others get the easier ones.

Ensure that you and your teaching team hold high expectations for all students and provide everyone with opportunities in class to:

- Speak up in response to deep questions, problems and issues
- Think through the questions you ask and the activities you give
- Build on prior knowledge
- Reconstruct knowledge
- Tutor peers.

In these ways, you actively promote intellectual endeavour, rigour and curiosity with all students in the class – important ingredients for high achievement.

Help students in their efforts to reach higher

Even with the best curriculum structure and teaching, the road to achievement can sometimes be rocky and uncertain for students. Let students know that learning doesn't just happen but requires commitment and effort.

Help students to persevere and to be successful by:

- Taking note when students fall behind in their skills or understanding, and provide them opportunities to catch up
- Providing examples of high achievement and explain how to do this
- Providing honest, encouraging and useful feedback that
  - verifies high accomplishment and what makes this good
  - shows how to improve
- Providing prompts and cues in your face-to-face and online interactions to help students get there on their own
- Allaying fears and uncertainties.

By carefully observing students and their learning, and using these observations to modify and improve your daily instruction and interactions, you will help your students to achieve deeper learning and reach higher goals.

In summary

What you do is important. Your level of enthusiasm and how you interact with students does make a difference. It influences your students' learning, effort, beliefs and actions. Empowering students to take responsibility for their own success results in a motivated class and great teaching satisfaction as you see students succeed and progress.

Find out more

Alderman, M. K. (2013). *Motivation for achievement : Possibilities for teaching and learning* (3rd ed.). Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.

Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Martin, A. J., & Dowson, M. (2009). Interpersonal relationships, motivation, engagement, and achievement: Yields for theory, current issues, and educational practice. *Review of Educational Research*, *79*(1), 327-365. doi: 10.3102/0034654308325583