



California Acceleration Project

Supporting California's 113 Community Colleges

To Transform Remediation to Increase Student Completion and Equity

www.AccelerationProject.org

Attending to the Affective Domain

When students aren't successful in their classes, the core issue is often *not* their ability to handle the course content. They have the capacity to write a good essay or solve a particular math problem; however, something happens at a more psychological and emotional level that gets in their way. When they encounter a difficult task, or receive critical feedback, or feel afraid that they're not cut out for college, or start to feel hopeless about their prospect of success, many community college students will disengage, withdraw effort, avoid turning in work, and even disappear from class.

Being an effective teacher requires that we understand the dynamics behind student disengagement and other self-sabotaging behaviors, and that we have intentional practices in place to help students be successful. We have grouped strategies for addressing the affective domain into 6 categories, with sample strategies for each.

- 1. Establishing & maintaining positive relationships:** *Community-building activities (e.g. ice breakers, early group projects); building in time for one-on-one work with students; watching out for our own emotional reactions and establishing a routine for talking individually with students who are exhibiting behaviors that impede their own or other students' learning*
- 2. Providing class time for students to process content & practice skills:** *Small group discussions, speed dating activities, student presentations, debates, independent and group activities in computer lab*
- 3. Regular opportunities for students' metacognitive reflection:** *Providing materials on topics connected to learning and asking students to write about how these connect to their experience; quick self-assessments connected to key assignments; longer self-reflection pieces; providing samples of strong student work and asking students to write about how they can improve their own performance next time*
- 4. Incentives and accountability for coming to class and doing the work:** *"Fess up" routines for when students haven't done assignments, incentives for perfect attendance, firm policies on attendance, limitations on turning in late work*
- 5. Intrusively intervening when students show signs of struggle or disengagement:** *Keeping a "worry list" and reaching out by email, initiating one-on-one conversations after class; monitoring who has turned in work and touching base with those who haven't; asking students to reach out to those who miss class*
- 6. Maintaining a "growth mindset" approach to feedback and grading:** *Syllabus policies that allow students to recover from a weak start; providing feedback that explicitly appreciates the thinking/skills students are exhibiting and guides them re: next things to work on; intentionally using re-do's and rewrites to foster growth; expectations that progress through major assignments over term*