

Teaching and Learning – 5 minutes

...over a hot brew!

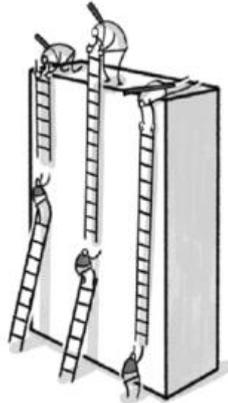
Research, Resilience, and Reflection

Issue 38:



1. Stretch and Challenge

A visual of how we might think of Stretch & Challenge. Different students at different abilities each with a challenge to reach, but never comfortably so... the learners are not in a comfort or, indeed, panic zone, but rather are in a state of challenge and progression based on their own individual needs; the teacher continually adjusts the difficulty level to sustain the desired degree of challenge.



2. Teaching Techniques: Right is right

What is it? When you respond to answers in class, hold out for answers that are 'all-the-way right' or all the way to your standards of rigour; make rigorous answers a habit for your students.

Why do it?

- Build an environment of habitual rigour.
- It's our job to set a high standard for answers in our classrooms and that we should strive to only call 'right' or 'correct' that which is really and truly worth of those terms.
- Accepting half-truths can misinform the student
- Accepting half-truths can convince us that the teaching has been successful – when there is a degree of misconception in the outcome

What does it look like?

- Accept the answer that you want not the first that arrives.
- Push for more – more detail, more depth.
- Return to the same student or open up to the wider group

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- Use superlatives such as 'excellent' and 'fantastic' carefully. Do not be afraid to replace well done with 'almost there' and 'you're on the right track but...'. The positive atmosphere can be maintained and will feel even better when a really rigorous answer is achieved in the end.

3. Promoting Mastery

Research by Anderman & Patrick (2012) suggests that by promoting mastery orientations we can help increase student engagement behaviorally, emotionally, and cognitively, thereby positively affecting student learning and achievement. By mastery orientations the researchers are referring to when students pursue an activity because they want to learn and understand (driven by a desire to learn). This is quite different from what they term performance orientations (working to merely obtain a good grade, look smart, please their parents, or outperform peers).

To encourage this mastery orientation mindset, various approaches can be considered including framing success in terms of learning (e.g. criterion-referenced) rather than performing (e.g. obtaining a good grade). Further to this an emphasis can be placed on individual progress by reducing social comparison (e.g. making grades private) and recognizing student improvement and effort over simplistic test scores.

4. To ponder...

"A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." [Henry Adams]



Thoughts about Teaching and Learning... Share!