

“Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education.”

(<http://edglossary.org/student-engagement/>)

When students are engaged, they are interested and invested in their learning, can explain the relevance and importance of their work, and their learning improves.

Student engagement results from the weaving together of the following elements of effective instruction by skillful teachers in ways that promote and facilitate student ownership and choice.

# 1. Learning Environment

The classroom learning environment supports learning for all students. This includes the physical environment, the routines and procedures, classroom management practices and the development of positive relationships that support a physically and socially/emotionally safe and supportive environment for taking risks, asking questions and making mistakes.

## Supporting Beliefs

- The environment is a shared domain between students, teachers, and other partners in learning.
- The learning environment is a space that fosters risk-taking for students and teachers; positive and meaningful relationships are the foundation of a productive learning culture.

Key Traits	
<p>PHYSICAL SPACE and ROUTINES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ There are clear routines and procedures. Students know what is expected, when and why.</li><li>○ Tools and materials are readily accessible to students.</li><li>○ The classroom can be configured in different ways to best fit the task at hand.</li></ul>	<p>RELATIONSHIPS and CULTURE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ All students feel safe to take risks and participate in this class.</li><li>○ Students have opportunities and support to build productive relationships with a variety of classmates.</li><li>○ Students collaborate with each other throughout the learning process.</li><li>○ There are positive relationships between the teacher/s and the students.</li><li>○ Being “wrong” is expected, accepted and used as a foundation for further learning.</li><li>○ Students are engaged and interested in what they learn in this classroom.</li><li>○ Students are involved, invested and engaged in the tasks they do.</li><li>○ Students reflect on their work and can explain their choices, strengths and areas of growth.</li></ul>

## 2. Clear, Shared Outcomes

The learning outcomes are shared and understood by teachers and students. These outcomes are used as an anchor to guide the choice of instructional activities, materials, practice assignments, and assessment tasks. These outcomes are understood by students and used to prompt self-reflection and goal setting.

### Supporting Beliefs

- Everyone involved in the learning process must know where we are going and why the work matters.
- Teachers and students need choice in their learning experiences to be invested in and achieve outcomes.
- A culture of reflection is necessary for students to set and adjust personalized goals.

### Key Traits

- The learning outcomes are clear--long-term (e.g., graduation standards) and short-term (learning objectives).
- There are clear descriptions of what success looks like.
- The materials and activities align with the learning objectives.
- Students can explain how tasks align to learning objectives.
- Students can use the standards and learning objectives to reflect on their own progress and set goals for growth.

### 3. Varied Content, Materials, and Methods of Instruction

Ideas and information are explored in varied ways so that a wide range of learners can find access points to the learning. Materials are selected and available to engage and accommodate all learners.

#### Supporting Beliefs

- Different entry points, options for exploration and end products are critical for student engagement and success.
- Learners must see themselves represented in the materials and connect to the content in authentic ways.

Key Traits		
<p><b>CONTENT:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students are exposed to new information in varied ways-- inquiry/investigation, presentation, hands-on, etc.</li> <li>○ Materials selected for instructional activities accommodate a variety of learners (are in written, oral, visual modes; are at varied reading levels, etc.).</li> <li>○ Students have choice and voice in what they learn.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PROCESS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student groupings are varied and intentionally matched to the activity and learner.</li> <li>○ Time and structures support re-teaching and extension of learning, as needed.</li> <li>○ Resources and materials are available and improve accessibility for a variety of learners.</li> <li>○ Students have meaningful choices to make about their learning and are taught how to make those choices well.</li> <li>○ Students use varied methods (differentiated homework, reading, activities) and supports (including technology) to advance their learning.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ASSESSMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students use varied supports (including technology) to demonstrate learning.</li> <li>○ Students have choices about how they demonstrate their learning.</li> <li>○ There are varied pathways available to students leading to common ends.</li> </ul>

## 4. Complex Thinking and Transfer

Students are coached and taught to engage in higher order thinking through instructional activities and practice tasks. Assessments are designed to prompt complex thinking, integration of concepts and ideas, and application of learned skills to new material or situations.

### Supporting Beliefs

- Every student is capable of complex thought.
- Higher order thinking promotes student engagement.
- Learning that promotes transfer of knowledge and skills prepares students for the future.

### Key Traits

- Students are asked questions that help them access and integrate knowledge to analyze, evaluate, draw conclusions and ask questions.
- Students are asked to wrestle with complex and authentic problems.
- Students are taught how to integrate and apply what they have learned and are given opportunities to practice.

## 5. Practice and Feedback

Students are given opportunities to practice what they are learning and given timely feedback based on their current performance in relation to the desired outcomes.

### Supporting Beliefs

- Learning is a cycle that includes mistakes, multiple attempts, difficulties, and course corrections.
- Timely, specific, and varied feedback is a catalyst for growth.
- Productive practice and novel application of skills are essential for learning.

### Key Traits

- There are opportunities for students to practice and receive feedback built into learning activities.
- Students are taught how to interpret and use feedback in their learning.
- Opportunities to practice and demonstrate essential skills and knowledge are available throughout a course.
- Students revise essential pieces of work (as time and resources allow) to demonstrate growth and proficiency.