**Zest, Grit & Sweat: Strategies to Promote Growth Mindset**

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**Self-Efficacy Questions for Student Reflection / Discussion**

Below you will find sets of questions designed to help you stimulate and lead student discussions about self-regulated learning beliefs. In some cases, your students may feel more comfortable reflecting individually in writing, or sharing in small groups if the class is large.

Absences

* If you miss class how will you get the notes you missed?
* Is the person who will share their notes with you, able to explain their notes clearly? As clearly as the teacher?

Note-taking during lectures

* What strategies do you use to stay focused if a lecture becomes boring?
* When a course covers a lot of material, what strategies do you use to condense your notes to the essentials?
* When you are trying to learn something, do you regularly try to connect it to other things you already understand?
* When you study with someone else, are you an effective study partner? What does a good study partner do? What are some characteristics of a not-so-good study partner?

Affect

* If you are in a bad mood, or feeling restless, can you motivate yourself to finish your work? How?
* If you fall behind, or if assignments are taking longer than you anticipated, how do you respond?

Dealing with difficulties/poor results

* If you didn’t do well on an exam because the questions caught you off guard, what will you do differently to better predict questions for next time?
* What strategies do you use to help you retain and recall technical information and details?
* When you have done poorly on a test, have you been able to go back to your notes to find the relevant information?

Adapted from: Kitsantas, A. & Zimmerman, B. J. 2009. College students’ homework and academic achievement: The mediating role of self-regulatory beliefs. *Metacognition and Learning,* 4(2): 97-110.

**BIG Questions Assignment**

This assignment gets students thinking about and revealing questions and issues of importance to them.

*Typical homework assignments ask students to ANSWER questions.*

*This assignment is different.*

*I'd like you to ASK questions.*

*What are you curious about?  What problems or issues are important to you?  What topics matter to you?  What questions do you wish you could answer?*

*Think carefully about this assignment.  While there are no wrong questions, some questions are better than others. Generally, yes-no and other closed-answer questions aren't going to be as interesting to consider as issues and questions with many possibilities.*

*The questions you raise will help to shape the direction of our work this term.  So please, take a little time to think about questions...  Even if you think the issue has nothing to do with this course, it might.  So if you are puzzled by something, please include it.*

*I look forward to exploring meaningful questions with you!*

**Multi-tasking Activity**

Select a phrase or question like: AM I A SKILLED MULTITASKER?

Round 1: Ask students to time themselves writing the A-1, M-2, I-3, A-4, S-5, and so on. They should alternate between the letters of “Am I a Skilled Multitasker?” and the numbers 1-23 in sequence. This round simulates the effects of brain switching, as participants are forced to switch between sequencing letters and numbers.

Round 2: Ask students to time themselves as they write the phrase “Am I a skilled multitasker?” immediately followed by writing the numbers 1-23. The second round result should look like this:

Am I a skilled multitasker?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

The time to complete the Round 2 activity will typically be ½ or less the time students needed to complete Round 1. Follow with a discussion about distractions they face most. Conclude by brainstorming strategies to minimize disruptions.

Adaptation from Crenshaw, D. 2008. *The Myth of Multitasking: How Doing It All Gets Nothing Done*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

**Contract Grading**

Some assignments are required of all students, with students choosing the course weight. In other areas, students may choose what to do and how much it will count. Depending on the course and the maturity/experience level of the students involved, sometimes a range of min/max weights are specified relative to the learning value of the activity/topic. Less flexibility is recommended in lower-level, required courses.

Potential Areas of Negotiation

* Participation in class discussions
* Informed, reflective writing assignments / Learning Journal
* Course project(s): their number, type, and course weight
* Mix between individual and team/group work
* There should be separate contracts for team- and individual-work
* Consider including contingencies:
  + Redo assignments
  + Do additional work to replace lower/marginal grades
* Contract renegotiation during the term

Classroom Activities

* Experiential exercises
* Role plays
* Simulations
* Case studies
* Storytelling
* Discussions in large and small groups
* Group projects
* Student presentations (planned or spontaneous)

Assignment choices

* Journals
* Reflective writing
* Research papers
* Case analysis
* Projects (individual and team-based)

Assignment Features

* Collaboration & independent work
* Introspection/Reflection on in- and out-of-class experiences
* Application of course theories
* Critical thinking
* Open-minded investigation
* Connections to content, self, and peers

Derived from Hiller, T.B. & Hietapelto, A.B. 2001. Contract Grading: Encouraging commitment to the learning process through voice in the evaluation process. *Journal of Marketing Education,* 25(6): 660-684.

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H: Heard. Hear the learner. Allow them a voice and input in class direction

E: Excited. Build excitement by incorporating students’ interests.

L: Liked. Care and express interest in students.

P: Personal. Know their names. Hear their stories

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The classroom works best when students and teachers perceive it as a place where there is a continuing conversation among interested people, similar to what one might have with neighbors and friends. A sense of community is not created by rules and laws but by a sense of mutual respect and tolerance. Good neighborliness cannot be legislated—it can only be learned by example and experience, and it flourishes in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance of differences.” P.57

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