

Small Teaching



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Small Teaching



“Much of what we’ve been doing as teachers and students isn’t serving us well, but some comparatively simple changes could make a big difference.”

Brown, Roediger, McDaniel

Make it Stick (Harvard UP, 2014)

Small Teaching



- **Brief** (5-15 minute) interventions into individual learning sessions
- **Limited** number of interventions or activities within an entire course
- **Minor** changes to course design, assessment structure, or communication with students

Empowering Faculty—and Students



- Small teaching activities can provide substantive learning boosts with **minimal investment of faculty time or institutional money.**
- Small teaching activities which foster continuous engagement produce especially **strong results with lower-performing students.**

What Motivates Student Learning?

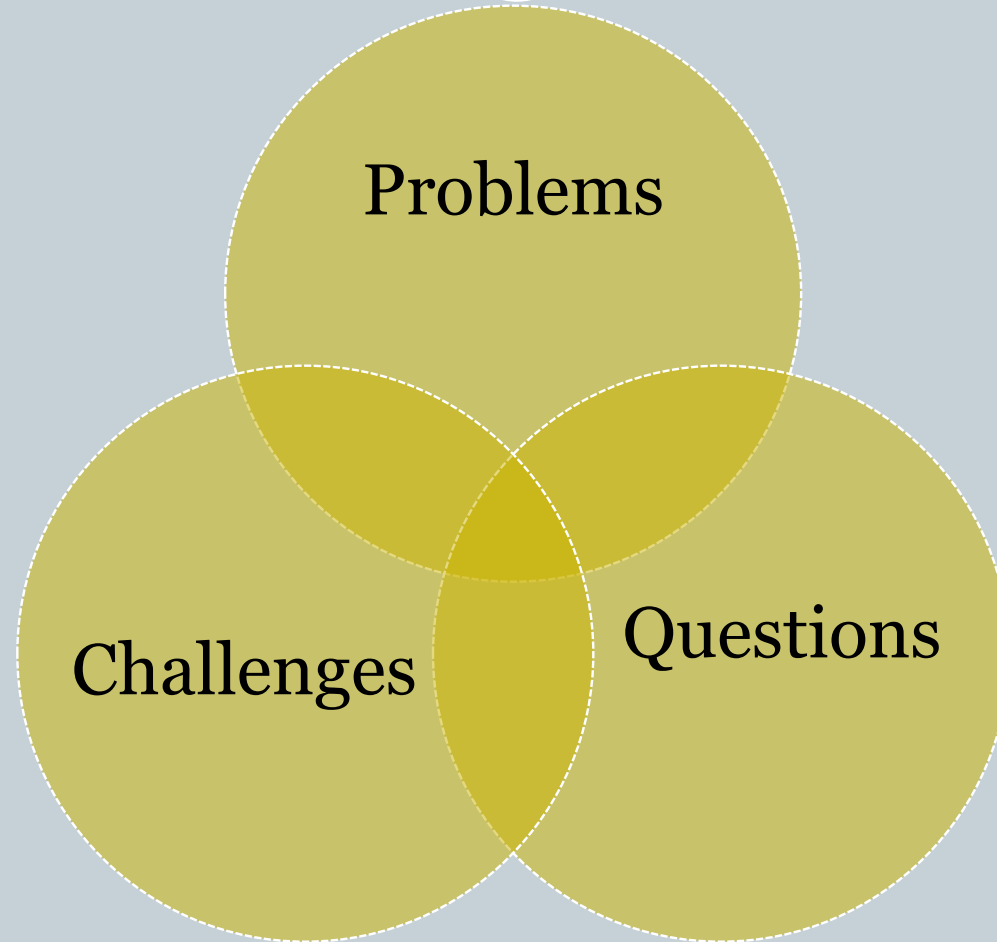


Purposeful Learning

Mastery Orientation

Growth Mindset

What the Best Teachers Do





Teaching Great Problems

Worcester
Polytechnic
Institute

- “Can we feed the world? Does use of ethanol in gasoline cause food shortages? What are the dangers and benefits to genetic engineering of food plants? Learn about and work to solve the current paradoxes of our food situation – the malnutrition of too little AND too much food: deprivation and obesity. What solutions are there – political, economic, biological and chemical?”

Self-Transcendence



Motives

Persistence

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Weak self-transcendent | 30% |
| • Moderate self-transcendent | 57% |
| • Strong self-transcendent | 64% |

“Boring But Important” (2014)

Yeager, D’Mello, et al

Community Service Learning



Accounting

- VITA Program
- Spring 2013
- 358 Tax Returns
- \$727,711 in Refunds

Spanish



Purposeful Learning



Who
Gives
A
Damn?

Mastery Oriented Classes



- 1) They “give students **a sense of** control over either the process or product.”
- 2) They “[allow] students to **have a say** in establishing priorities in task completion.”

Journal of Educational Psychology

Creating Mastery Orientation



“Where possible, allow students to choose among options and make **choices** that are consistent with their goals and the activities that they value.”

Susan Ambrose et al

“One important rule for helping people learn is *to help the learner feel she is in **control**.*”

James Zull



John Boyer's World Regions Course



Big Picture Mastery

World Regions Grading Policy



- “Instead of having a set amount of mandatory activities that you are required to do and then assessing your grade from your performance, I am going to provide a host of opportunities for you to earn points towards your grade, **thus allowing you to choose your path according to your interests and skills.** It's a 'create your fate' grade: you choose what you want to work on, and keep earning points doing different activities until you achieve the grade you desire.”

The Blank Syllabus



- “In a 4-page essay, discuss a selection of your own choosing . . . from the *Oxford Book of War Poetry*. **This poem will be added to the syllabus**, and on the day it appears you will recite at least 80 words of it for the class, and you will help me lead discussion of it. The working claim for this essay may well be an answer to the question, ‘Why should we as a class read this poem?’”

Class Constitutions



- Can you make room for students to participate in decisions about *course policies*?
 - Technology in the Classroom
 - Policies on Late Work
 - Academic Integrity
 - Use of Social Media
 - Extra Credit

Mindset



Fixed

Growth

Negotiating Class



- “The more negotiators collectively endorsed an incremental view, the more likely they were to overcome initial failures and construct an agreement that led to an acceptable solution for both parties.”
- “The more malleable students believed negotiating ability to be on the first day of class, the higher their final course grade 15 weeks later.”

Kray and Haselhuhn

Fixed Mindset Communications



- “He said: ‘You either know the formulas and concepts or you don’t. You either are the kind of person how has the skills to understand math or you don’t.’”
- “My professor said: ‘30% of you will fail, 20% of you will get D’s. It happens every year and it will happen this year to you.’”

Growth Mindset Communications



- “I had one math professor who described a student from a previous semester who he said was not naturally good at math, however, he regularly attended office hours and asked questions, and ended up getting the highest grade in the class. He told the story to encourage students to ask questions and attend office hours.”

Mary Murphy

“Faculty Mindsets: How Faculty Signal Fixed and Growth Beliefs to College Students”

Teaching for Growth



Communicate for Growth

Success Strategies

Celebrating Learning

Small Teaching Questions



- Does this learning have a *clear purpose* visible to students?
- Have you offered students *choices* and a *sense of control* over their learning?
- Are you instilling a *growth mindset*?