

Section 1: Evidence-Based Practices

Motivating students is one of the most challenging and important aspects of teaching. Practicing a variety of researched motivational techniques has proven to increase student engagement.

The following is a list of evidence-based practices from the [Student Motivation](#) domain of the [Teaching Effectiveness Framework](#). Look for some of these practices while observing your colleagues.



INSTRUCTIONAL MOTIVATION TECHNIQUES

- [Use content and connections that align with your current group of students'](#) backgrounds, interests, and reasons for taking the course; pose "big questions" that are relevant to students' lives
- Share your [enthusiasm](#), professional research interests, and experiences with the content
- Promote [growth mindset](#) and students' [resilience](#) by shifting attention to problem solving, appropriately scaled challenges, and working through failure
- Support students when [working in groups](#).
- Provide opportunities for students to [teach and learn from their peers](#)
- [Teach from everywhere in the room](#), not just from behind the podium
- Use humor appropriately and through an inclusive lens



INSTRUCTIONAL LANGUAGE

- Use a student's preferred name and pronouns
- Use [positive language](#) when discussing challenging topics
- If students struggle, remind them [they don't know it yet](#) to reinforce that you believe they will eventually reach their goal
- When giving feedback, [use language that honors attempts, promotes growth, and provides hope to students](#)
- [Use varied names](#) and socio-cultural contexts in stories, test questions and assignments



INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN FOR MOTIVATION

- Set up the course in Canvas with a clear, consistent flow so students spend their time learning the material, not trying to find it
- Use a variety of instructional strategies from your teaching "toolkit"; provide opportunities for students to engage in a [variety of learning modalities](#): group learning, [peer learning](#), individual learning, learning with technology, etc.
- Challenge students with deep learning ([case studies](#), [community engaged learning](#), collaborative projects, etc.)
- Acknowledge student effort; [allow room in your grading](#) for risk-taking and error
- [Gauge the rigor of your instruction](#). Is it at a level that will provide the correct learning edge for students?
- [Make content relevant](#) to all students' lives; [clearly link concepts/lessons](#) to industry, a broader purpose, [future classes/activities](#), or a transferable skill
- Adhere to a consistent activity schedule; incorporate consistent reminders or periodic check-ins



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Encourage [behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement in your course](#)
- Engage students' [emotions](#) to see their potential and ability to make the world a better place
- Establish instructor presence through consistent use of instructor audio and video
- Incorporate weekly discussions using discussion prompts to generate conversation and deep student learning
- Encourage students to set a study schedule to complete the work for the course and ask for assistance as soon as they need it
- Incorporate [three types of engagement](#): student-instructor, student-student, and student-content

PLEASE NOTE:

- The goal of Teaching Squares is for the observer to learn/gain as much, if not more, than the person being observed.
- Not all of these practices will be observable in one class session, 1-week or 1-module timeframe.



CANVAS OBSERVATIONS: You may have been added to the Canvas course as a *Designer*.

In this role you will not be able to view student grades, but this role does allow you to make changes to the course.

Please be careful as you navigate through the course, so you don't make accidental edits. Be sure to maintain the confidentiality of the instructor and all students and their work. Limit your observation to the desired LMS module/week (typically 50-60 mins).

Section 2: Background Information

To be filled out by the instructor **being observed**

BASIC DATA

- Instructor Name:
- Course Number & Name:
- Course Location (or Canvas Shell URL):
- Observation Period (date or module):
- Number of Students Enrolled in Class:

PLANNING FOR THE OBSERVATION

1. Some motivation techniques *are not apparent to an observer*. What practices do you incorporate in your class that would be hard for the observer to see, but you would like them to know?

Briefly describe any practices you incorporate from any of the focus areas on the list on the first page of this document:

Student Motivation Technique:

Reason for using this practice:

Student Motivation Technique:

Reason for using this practice:

Student Motivation Technique:

Reason for using this practice:

2. Is there anything specific, a goal or issue you have been working on, that you would like the observer to pay attention to?
3. Is there anything else (not included above) you would like observed? (student use of phones, student engagement overall, late arrivals, early departures, etc.)
4. Is there anything else you would like the observer to know before observing your class?



Section 3: Observation Notes

FEEDBACK STARTER IDEAS

- I really liked how you...
- This works well because....
- Have you considered...
- I wonder if...

OBSERVATION FEEDBACK

To be filled out by the instructor **completing the observation**

Beginning of Class/Module

1. Describe how the instructor **begins** the class session or the module.

Does it appear that they are using a specific motivation technique?
(see page 1)

Describe the strategy.

2. Do you have any suggestions that might refine or enhance the beginning of the class/module?

Teaching the Class/Module

1. Describe motivation techniques demonstrated for the class session/observation period being observed.
2. Describe the tone of the language used in class, in the syllabus, announcements, etc.

Observer Reflection

*Things to remember
for my own
teaching...*



Teaching the Class/Module (continued)

3. Describe 1 - 2 times throughout the class session/observation period when students seem to be highly engaged.

What did the instructor do?

How did students respond?

4. Describe 1 or 2 techniques that might be integrated or refined to enhance student motivation.

Wrapping up the Class/Module

1. Describe how the instructor **closes** the class session or the module.

2. Does it appear that they are using a specific motivational strategy? (see page 1)

Describe the strategy.

Describe how students respond.

3. Do you have any suggestions that might refine or enhance the **closing** of the class/module?

Observer
Reflection

*Things to remember
for my own
teaching...*

