USING POSITIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TO INCREASE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by:

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Teachers are key players in fostering student engagement. They work directly with the students and typically are the most influential in their educational experience. Creating a culture of achievement in their classroom, developing interactive and relevant lessons and activities, and being encouraging and supportive to students are all ways in which teachers can foster student engagement in the classroom. (Akey, 2006; Garcia-Reid et al., 2005)

One method of enhancing student engagement is to cultivate a culture of achievement in the classroom where instruction is challenging, students feel comfortable asking questions, and students are expected to do their best. When students feel challenged, they are less likely to be bored and disengaged. (Akey, 2006) Teachers should aim to create a culture in the classroom where learning is “cool,” and asking questions is not only accepted but expected. It may take some time to develop this type of environment, but it can be done by setting clear, high, consistent yet attainable expectations for all students. High quality instruction—one that is rigorous, aligned with content standards, and uses instructional strategies to meet the academic needs of all students—also is a key factor in promoting a culture of engagement and achievement in the classroom. (Weiss & Pasley, 2004)

Additionally, student engagement is positively correlated to teacher support. Several studies have found that students who noted that their teachers were supportive and cared about their success were more likely to be engaged in the classroom and perform well academically (Heller et al., 2003; Akey, 2006). One study found that students
who do not feel confident in their ability to succeed are not likely to attempt to do the work (Akey, 2006). Building a student’s confidence is not about falsely telling students how great they are. Instead, it is about assessing student weaknesses and strengths and developing ways to address them at developmentally appropriate yet rigorous levels.

There are many strategies that the teachers and the school leaders can implement to greatly enhance students’ motivation and investment in their educational experience. And in order to be most effective in sustaining positive student engagement in learning and increase academic performance, all of these efforts should be consistent and continual throughout the academic year and throughout each student’s educational career.

References:
