# Chapter 5: Engagement with Learning

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| **Ideas for Instruction and Instructor Training** | **Videos and CD-ROMs** | **Media Resources for Instructors** | Media Resources for Students |
| **Instructor’s Manual (IM)**  Includes a brief lesson plan for Chapter 5, chapter objectives, lecture launchers, commentary on exercises in the book, and case studies.  **Test Bank (in IM)**  Multiple Choice, True/False, Short Answer and Essay Questions. Also available in ExamView® electronic format, which can be customized to fit your needs. | ***10 Things Every Student Needs to Know to Study* Video**  6-minute segment entitled “Learning in the Classroom.”  **ExamView® CD-ROM**  Computerized version of the Test Bank items for Chapter 5. | JoinIn™ Hand-held audience response device allows students immediate response to multiple-choice questions, polls, and interactive exercises.  **Multimedia Manager 2007 CD-ROM**  PowerPoint presentations, video clips, images, and web links help with assembly, editing, and presentation of multimedia lectures. | **iLrn® Pin-Coded Website**  Contains self-assessments, electronic journals that encourage students to reflect on their progress, essay questions and exercises, and Test Your Knowledge interactive quizzes for chapter 5.  **InfoTrac**® **College Edition**  May be bundled with text.  *Keywords:* college success, liberal arts, goal setting, values, colleges, universities. |

## A. Chapter Objectives

1. To explain what engaged learning means and why it is important
2. To clarify the differences between high school and college
3. To describe how engagement can improve the quality of your learning
4. To help students realize that a positive relationship with an instructor may be a critical part of the learning process in college
5. To explain what college teachers expect of their students

## B. Timing of Chapter Coverage

Cover the specifics of time management (Chapter 2) before approaching this chapter.

## C. About This Chapter

There is an abundance of research and scholarship to support the importance of actively involving students in the learning process. This chapter provides for students a rationale for the value of becoming engaged in the learning process and offers strategies to accomplish this. Since the authors believe so completely in active learning, we recommend that as instructors you strive to employ as many active learning devices as you can throughout the first-year seminar course:

* Ask students for feedback regularly, read their remarks, and respond to them.
* Employ the “one-minute paper” at the end of class: What was the most important issue of today’s class? What is the unanswered question you have about today’s class? The answers will prepare you to reach your students the next day.
* Help students understand that there are no “dumb questions.” Challenge them to ask the questions that nobody else in the room wants to ask because they think the instructor will laugh at them, even though they need answers.

Expectations often differ between students and faculty and some students may be surprised by the expectations of their instructors. Some are even taken “off guard” and can be resistant. This chapter addresses the background, qualities, and expectations of a good teacher and a good student. Encourage students to get to know their teachers. A suggestion: challenge each student to interview the teacher he or she likes least. Students may only confirm their dislike in some cases, but in others they may find a different individual sitting across the desk from them.

## D. Suggested Outline for Addressing Topics in Chapter 5

**STEP I:** BEGIN WITH A LECTURE LAUNCHER OR ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

**STEP II:** EMPLOY A VARIETY OF CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

* 1. Use the PowerPoint presentation from ***Multimedia Manager 2007*** resource
  2. Expand on key lesson themes
  3. Involve peer leaders
  4. Use chapter exercises
  5. Engage students in learning through case studies

**STEP III**: REVIEW & PREVIEW

a. Address common questions and concerns about the topic

b. Writing reflection

c. Prepare for next class

## Expanded Lesson Plan

### STEP I: Lecture Launchers and Icebreakers

* Ask your students to write a response to this question: “What is engagement with

learning?” Take the time to have students read their answers to the rest of the class. It

will be time well spent. You will learn if they understand the difference, and you’ll

probably be able to elaborate on some of the comments they make. This activity could

serve as a segue into the lesson mini lecture.

* Share some of the **personal distresses** that you encountered as you made the transition from high school to college. Let the students offer suggestions on how things have changed or are similar from when you were a freshman to now.

### STEP II: Classroom Activities

**a.** **Use the PowerPoint presentations in *Multimedia Manager 2007*** **to complement your mini**

**lecture.**

**b. Key Lesson Themes**

* Discuss the background, qualities, and expectations of a good teacher and a good student. During the discussion, point out some critical thinking and active learning skills that students bring to a situation where there is engagement in the learning process.
* Introduce your students to the many uses of Learning Teams (pages 77-79). Discuss the strengths and challenges of each type of learning team.

**c. Group Activities**

You may consider having your students come up with a plan on how to go about finding a mentor on campus. Encourage them to find a partner who might help them with a few of their goals, just as they might help another class member with his or her goals.

**d. Peer Leader Assistance**

Share personal anecdotes of how and when team learning has helped you succeed in a difficult course or courses. Discuss the value of having a good relationship with your professors, and how being engaged in your learning has improved your learning.

**e. Case Studies**

**Joseph**

Joe is a student in his first year of college. In his science lab, he was placed in a group of three other students, all of whom are returning students and much older than he is. Joe’s group decided together on task assignments and agreed to meet twice during the week to prepare. During the project, Joe attempted to contact the group repeatedly but the members could not agree on a time to meet due to their various other commitments. It is now two days before the due date for the project, and Joe has done very little work. One other group member finally calls him to tell him that everyone else has completed their tasks and they have decided on the plan for the class presentation. Joe is upset and tells the group member that he has not finished his part of the project because he was planning on the group meetings to help guide him. The group member suggests that Joe should not get any credit at all.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What should Joe do to resolve this conflict?
2. How should Joe approach his group members? His instructor?
3. How could this problem have been avoided?
4. What are the benefits and pitfalls of collaborative learning in this situation?

**Kelsea**

Kelsea is an extremely bright first-year student. She routinely turns in A-level work to her instructors. The problem is that Kelsea rarely turns her work in on time, and is always asking for extensions. She blames her tardiness on insomnia, which she’s suffered from since she was a young teen. Kelsea’s insomnia has gotten so bad that she’s begun missing classes due to sheer exhaustion. Through one particularly bad spell, Kelsea blows an important deadline on a research paper for her English instructor. The instructor’s syllabus clearly states that late papers are not accepted, and if Kelsea gets a zero on this assignment, she will fail the class.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. If you were Kelsea, how would you handle this situation?
2. What would you do if you were Kelsea’s instructor?
3. Is it fair for an instructor to bend the rules for a student in certain circumstances?

**f. Chapter Exercises**

* **Exercise 5.1: To Collaborate or Not?**

Have your students complete this exercise after finishing a group project.

* **Exercise 5.2: Forming Your Ideal Learning Team**

Because this exercise is about other members of the class, it is recommended that students complete this assignment outside of class. Students can report to the class what they found out in their group.

* **Exercise 5.3: Sizing Up College Professors**

As suggested in the previous chapter, students can complete this exercise as a

preparation for today’s class. Have a discussion with the class, asking them what qualities their favorite teachers had in common.

### STEP III: Review and Preview

**REVIEW**

**a. Address Common Questions and Concerns of First-Year Students:**

* ***What can I do if I can’t stand my teacher?***

Answer: Express to your students the importance of meeting with their instructors during office hours. If this doesn’t improve the situation, and it’s early enough in the semester, they may want to exercise the “drop/add” option and find another class. But if that date has passed, and the situation still isn’t resolved, it’s time for your student to visit the department head. If the student remains unsatisfied with the outcome of that meeting, he or she should continue to climb the administrative ladder until they feel their voice has been heard.

* ***Why don’t teachers just tell me what I need to know, like they did in high school?***

Answer: This is the sort of question that leads into a great discussion about the benefits of active learning versus those of passive learning. Most high school classrooms emphasize the latter, and that is what many students are more comfortable with. Review with your students the bullet points on page 71 that outline why active learning puts them in charge of their own education.

* ***My friend is taking the same course from another teacher and the class is entirely***

***different, not to mention easier. Why?***

Answer: The courses seem different because every teacher is different. What’s important is focusing on what and how you’re learning in this particular course.

* ***I need to make an appointment with my professor but he’s never available. What***

***can I do?***

Answer: If your professor’s office hours conflict with your schedule, ask him to meet with you at an alternate time. If that doesn’t work, see if you can set up a phone appointment. Another alternative is to e-mail your professor and open up a dialogue with him over the Internet. If you’ve tried all of the above and still can’t arrange an appointment with your professor—i.e., if you’ve put out a good faith effort and he hasn’t—it may be time to approach his department chair about his unwillingness to meet with you outside of class.

* ***When I try to ask my teacher why I’m doing so poorly on assignments, she doesn’t***

***seem to want to help me. What can I do about it?***

Answer: First, evaluate how you’re asking for help. Are you trying to get your teacher to spoon-feed you answers? It’s likely that what you’re interpreting as a lack of help is your teacher’s way of getting you to be more of an active than passive learner. However, if you’re honestly stumped as to how to do better on assignments, think about how you can phrase your questions to your teacher so that she understands you’re not asking her to give you the answers. Asking about the process of creating the final product, not the final product itself, will show her that you’re seeking comprehension, and not just an A.

**b. Writing Reflection**

* **The One-Minute Paper**

1. Ask your students to choose one of their classes and write what they thought the main issue was that day. Tell them they should also list any unanswered questions they have for the next class.
2. During the next class they attend, have them evaluate if those questions are now answered. If not, see if they can identify what active learning skills they can use to improve this situation.
3. Consider asking your students to try this for a week. Then, ask them if this helped them master the information in the class and how.
4. Students can write a summary of their experience as well as discuss it in class.

**PREVIEW FOR NEXT CLASS**

Make copies of a newspaper or magazine article on a social issue and distribute to the class.

Ask your students to read the article before they come to the next class. In addition, they are

to look critically at the content. Is there a bias? Did the author approach the subject with an open mind? Are there assumptions or conclusions that do not seem accurate? At the next class bring in an opinion piece to show students the difference.

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## E. Test Questions

**Multiple Choice - choose ONE answer per question.**

1. Engagement means

a. active involvement in every aspect of life.

b. approaching every challenge with determination.

c. a and b

d. none of the above

1. According to the text, when forming a learning team, you should NOT
   1. seek peers who are different than you in terms of cultural background.
   2. keep the group large (7 or more students).
   3. hold individual team members accountable for their own learning.
   4. hold individual team members accountable for contributing to the learning of their teammates.
2. All of the following are benefits of collaborative learning EXCEPT:
   1. It can help you develop leadership skills.
   2. It stimulates positive competition.
   3. It is a substitute for attending class.
   4. It will help you build stronger bonds with classmates.
3. In identifying a possible mentor, look for someone who
   1. takes a special interest in you.
   2. encourages you to challenge yourself.
   3. offers to meet with you to discuss your work.
   4. all of the above
4. In a ground-breaking study on factors predicting success in calculus, it was determined that the most effective strategy for success in calculus turned out to be
   1. active participation in a study group.
   2. individualized learning.
   3. a and b
   4. none of the above
5. If you are unsatisfied with a grade you received on a recent paper, the first thing you should do is
   1. file a complaint within the department.
   2. ask your teacher if you can redo the assignment.
   3. ask another instructor within the same department to look at your paper and offer a second opinion.
   4. speak with your teacher to discuss the assignment.

**True/False**

7. In a major study of teaching at Harvard University, one technique for improving learning was a simple feedback exercise.

8. Working in teams lessens your engagement with learning.

9. If you can’t tolerate a particular instructor you should see the department head immediately.

10. Only tenured professors make good mentors.

**Short Answer**

11. Name three benefits of collaborative learning.

12. What are the two components of the one-minute paper?

13. What are some qualities you need to look for when choosing a mentor?

14. List some simple things you can do to improve relations between you and your teachers.

**Essay**

15. Collaborating with your peers to form learning teams is a powerful way to improve your own learning. However, many students think that forming a “study group” is the one and only type of learning team. Cite three other types of learning teams and explain why each may be particularly effective for improving your academic performance.

16. Think of a time when you’ve had a conflict with a teacher. What was the conflict? What was your role in it? The teacher’s role? How was the conflict resolved? Is there anything you would do differently today?

17. Think of a time when you worked in a group to complete a project. What were some of the

things that went wrong. If you had an opportunity to redo that project, what would you do

differently?

18. Identify someone you would like to be your mentor. Interview him or her and write an essay on why you chose this person and what you’ve learned about this person.

**Chapter 5 Answer Key**

1. c, p. 72
2. b, p. 76
3. c, p. 75
4. d, p. 79
5. a, p. 77
6. d, p. 79
7. true, p. 74
8. false, p. 75
9. false, p. 79
10. false, p. 79

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## F. Web Resources

**Active v. Passive Learning -** <http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/hanna/learning/activevspassive.htm>

Have your students look at this grid, which outlines some of the differences between students who are passive and those who are learning actively. Afterward, they can take “How to Learn in College,” a quiz found at <http://lpc1.clpccd.cc.ca.us/lpc/hanna/learning/collegelearningquiz.htm>.

**How is College Different? –** <http://www.smu.edu/alec/transition.html>

Have your students take a look at this site, which defines high school as a “teaching environment” and college as a “learning environment.” It contains several links to further comparisons between high school and college.

**Making Friends with Instructors –** <http://www.adultstudent.com/student/share/bclark.html>

AdultStudents.com offers this brief article, which offers tips for fostering a positive student-teacher relationship.

**Model of Active Learning –**  [http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/active.htm](http://www.ihep.com/Org.php?parm=Press/PR6.htm)

This model takes a look at four components of active learning – experience of doing, experience of observing, dialogue with self, and dialogue with others – and explains each component fully.

**The One-Minute Paper –** <http://www.indiana.edu/~econed/issues/v29_1/1.htm>

The *Journal of Economic Education* originally published this study, which looks at some empirical findings regarding the usefulness of the one-minute paper. The link takes you to an abstract of the article, but you can download the full report free from the site.

**Subject-Specific Study Techniques -**

[City College of San Francisco Learning Assistance Center Favorite Academic Websites  
http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/Learning\_Assistance/favorites1.shtml](http://www.ccsf.edu/Services/Learning_Assistance/favorites1.shtml)

[Chemeketa Community College Study Skills Resources: How to Study](http://studyweb.chemek.cc.or.us/resources.htm#How to Study)  [http://studyweb.chemek.cc.or.us/resources.htm#How to Study](http://studyweb.chemek.cc.or.us/resources.htm#How%20to%20Study)

[Startribune.com: Homework Help  
http://www.startribune.com/homework\_help/](http://www.startribune.com/homework_help/)

[Academic Resource Core LINKS: Study Skills  
http://www.geocities.com/arc\_links/links\_4.htm?#skill](http://www.geocities.com/arc_links/links_4.htm?#skill)