MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE

# TOOLKIT

By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

# INTRODUCTION

This professional development series is designed to accompany and help put into practice the ideas in Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula's **Students at the Center** paper, *Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice*,[1] and their chapter, "Prioritizing Motivation and Engagement," in *Anytime, Anywhere: Student-Centered Learning for Schools and Teachers*.[2] For many teachers, the issues discussed in those pieces are at the heart of the student experience they are trying to provide. The purpose of the activities and materials in this series is to prepare educators to understand, contextualize, and apply the concepts explained in the research so that student-centered approaches are more frequently used in middle and high school classrooms.

The activities are designed to facilitate the development of a mindset that encourages a critical analysis of what participants believe, what they do, and what might need to be changed to fully realize the potential of student-centered teaching. Each activity either concludes with or is dedicated to the development of student-centered practices that are anchored in the research findings detailed in the paper. Some activities are best conducted before participants read the paper or book chapter and some are best done after it has already been read (*see table 1 on page 2*).

Taking seriously the authors' claim that "to build student-centered classrooms we need to build schools and school cultures that are teacher centered," the activities are easily personalized for particular audiences and may be adapted to fit time and location constraints. Although designed as a series of workshops bookended by a pre- and post-survey of beliefs, activities can also be done as individual "one–off" sessions and in any order.

[1] Toshalis, Eric & Michael Nakkula. 2012. *Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice: The Students at the Center Series*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/topics/motivation-engagement-and-student-voice.

[2] Toshalis, Eric & Michael Nakkula. 2013. "Prioritizing Motivation and Engagement." In *Anytime, Anywhere Student-Centered Learning for Schools and Teachers*, eds. Rebecca E. Wolfe, Adria Steinberg, & Nancy Hoffman. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

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## TABLE 1.
## MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND VOICE ACTIVITIES

| Activity | Focus | Time Req'd | Materials Required | Ideal Participants | Key Concept Connections | Pre-Reading Req'd* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **#1: Survey & Forced Choice Exercise** | Uncovering the different assumptions and beliefs that drive classroom practices | 90-120 mins | Questionnaire, prompt selection list, forced choice corner labels, PowerPoint slides | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | motivation, intelligence, engagement, student voice, belonging, "acting white," multitasking, persistence | No |
| **#2: Myth-busting Jigsaw** | Exploring common myths about how and when students learn best | 60-90 mins | Copies of paper, myth-busting jigsaw graphic organizer, PowerPoint countdown slides | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | intelligence, motivation, socio-cultural influences on school engagement, stereotype threat, "acting white," student voice | No |
| **#3: Fishbowl Conversation** | Developing and sharing specific practices that address the research in the paper | 45-60 mins | Flipchart or projector to display focus question and record participants' ideas | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | student engagement, achievement motivation, classroom practices | Yes |
| **#4: Peeling the Onion Protocol** | Examining realistic implementation possibilities given the current high-stakes context | 45-60 mins | Flipchart or projector to display the sentence-starters, copies of protocol for everyone | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | standardized testing, Common Core State Standards, student engagement, achievement motivation, classroom practices | Yes |
| **#5: Checking In Before They Check Out** | Applying insights from the paper to a specific student of concern | 60-75 mins | "Checking in before they check out" worksheet | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | self-regulation, cultural responsiveness, student voice, intelligence, autonomy, technology rigor | Yes |
| **#6: Locating Our Work** | Evaluating the extent to which our school, extracurricular activities, classrooms, and courses support student voice | 60-90 mins | Copies for everyone of figure 3 on page 24, discussion prompts on flipcharts or projected on screen | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents, and students | student voice and choice, classroom practices, school-wide policies and approaches, opportunities in the community | Helpful but not necessary |
| **#7: Listing and Shifting** | Rebuilding powerful and productive practices based on research rather than "common sense" | 45-60 mins | Copies of the "Instead of . . . Try this" worksheet, flipchart or projector and screen | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | blaming students, tracking, praise, student-centered practices, school reform | Yes |
| **#8: Extending the Learning, Expanding the Impact** | Moving from what we know to what we will do, and identifying key players in making things happen | 45-60 mins | Individual copies of the 3-column "extending the learning" worksheet, poster-sized reproduction of the 4-column version of worksheet | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | open-ended | Yes |
| **#9: Survey Post-test with Collective Debriefing** | Reflecting on what was learned, and what that learning suggests about our own journeys as learners and teachers | 45-60 mins | Flipchart or projector to display prompts and record participants' responses | teachers, counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, administration, parents | open-ended | Yes |

*Yes = Read paper or book chapter prior to activity

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**MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT**
**ACTIVITY #1**
# SURVEY AND FORCED CHOICE EXERCISE
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

# SURVEY (LIKERT SURVEY PRE-TEST) AND FORCED CHOICE EXERCISE

**Estimated time to complete:** 90-120 minutes

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Pre/Post Survey

> Survey prompt selection list

> Forced Choice Signage

> PowerPoint pre/post survey slides

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before participants read the paper or chapter, ask them to complete the Pre/Post Survey questionnaire and save their responses for later activities.

2. After reading the paper or chapter, instruct participants to circle 3-6 of the prompts on the questionnaire that they most want to discuss with their colleagues.

3. At the meeting you facilitate, in which this reading and activity are integrated, post a list of the survey prompts on the wall and ask participants to put a check next to those they most want to discuss with their colleagues. Use that list to decide which prompts to use in the forced choice exercise immediately following.

4. Forced choice activity: Post signs at each corner (use Forced Choice Signage) high enough for all to see above participants' heads, making sure the "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" signs are at opposite corners from each other. Announce rules:

  a. Everyone must stand in a corner (no standing in-between)

  b. Everyone must have specific reasons for standing where they are and be ready to articulate those reasons

  c. Participants may move if arguments or explanations cause them to change their mind.

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5.  Use the PowerPoint slides (A1_pre-post survey slides.pptx) slides to display the prompts that participants most wanted to discuss. Read the prompt aloud, allow time for participants to move to their corners, then facilitate dialogue among participants. Ask them to describe why they are standing where they are and get participants in opposite corners to debate one another, supplying reasons for their decisions based on the paper and their experiences. Push participants to articulate practices that are suggested by the research cited in the paper and consider recording those practices on a flipchart or whiteboard as the discussion unfolds.

6.  Conclude by referencing a return to these prompts in Activity #9 (if using), or having participants describe the classroom practices they currently use that they intend to strengthen or change based on the paper and the forced choice discussion activity.

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# PRE/POST SURVEY

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## PRE/POST SURVEY

1.  By the time students reach high school, their motivation to achieve is more or less stable—they either want to learn or they don't.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

2.  Intelligence is a dynamic phenomenon. It changes incrementally based on how hard one works at something and on how well one is supported to do it.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

3.  When it comes to generating the motivation to attempt challenging work in school, it doesn't matter what students believe about their capabilities; what matters is students' focus and effort.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

4.  Telling students how smart they are and praising them for such qualities will help motivate them to work harder and achieve more.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

5.  Using incentives in the classroom (i.e., rewards such as candy, free time, gold stars, pizza parties, movies, and prizes) motivates students to do their best and could lead to their becoming lifelong learners.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

6.  Adolescent students are not yet mature enough to choose the academic tasks they will complete and in general are not sufficiently focused to select from several options which classroom activities they will do.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

7.  Students are more likely to complain that school is too challenging rather than not challenging enough.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

8.  Sometimes you have to choose between being supportive or being demanding when trying to motivate students to achieve academically.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

9.  Whenever I give my students opportunities to decide which activities, assignments, materials, problems, or projects they will do, they waste time and get bogged down in unproductive socializing.

    ☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

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**10.** It's impossible for students to be academically successful unless they feel that they are valued members of the classroom learning community, and unless they feel connected to, included by, and known by both me and their peers.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**11.** Some students purposefully do not do well in school because they don't want to appear too mainstream or be perceived to be "acting white."

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**12.** Teaching students how to multitask will help them learn content at a deeper and more efficient level.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**13.** Students who disengage from school do not value education as much as their more engaged peers.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**14.** For off-task and off-topic students, attitude problems are generally more their issue than skill deficits.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**15.** I don't think that allowing students to send and receive text messages during class is a big distraction as long as it is done quietly and unobtrusively.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**16.** Middle and high school students are capable of leading classroom, school-wide, and community reform efforts that will produce important and measurable change.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

**17.** Asking students regularly for their opinions will capitalize on the power of student voice.

☐ Strongly Agree          ☐ Agree          ☐ Disagree          ☐ Strongly Disagree

# FORCED CHOICE SIGNAGE

# AGREE

# FORCED CHOICE SIGNAGE

# STRONGLY AGREE

# DISAGREE

# STRONGLY DISAGREE

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# MYTH-BUSTING JIGSAW

By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

## MYTH-BUSTING JIGSAW: A TOOL TO EXAMINE LEARNING MYTHS

**Estimated time to complete:** 60-90 minutes

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

> A copy of the **Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice** paper or "Prioritized Motivation & Engagement" book chapter for each participant

> A copy of **Myth-busting Jigsaw Graphic Organizer** document for each participant

> PowerPoint countdown slides

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Form heterogeneous groups of four.

2. Each group is assigned two myths from the **Myth-busting Jigsaw Graphic Organizer** and the pages in the paper or book chapter that might best help dispel them. That "expert group" then discusses the myths and how the paper refutes them. The expert groups should develop an argument to present to other groups about why the stated beliefs are errant, basing their argument on the current research. Give them 8-10 minutes to do this work.

3. The expert groups then number off 1-4 and move to pre-established "home group" tables. Each person has five minutes to present their myths and teach the other participants why they are both problematic and contrary to findings from peer-reviewed research. Use the PowerPoint slides (A2_Countdown -- 5 min.pptx) to raise the level of concern and keep folks transitioning on time.

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4. Conclude with a whole-group discussion. Possible prompts include:

   a. Which myths had you already become aware of? How did you learn that they were errant?

   b. What sources do you most trust to learn about such things? How do you regularly access those sources?

   c. What did you find most surprising in your discussions about these myths? What was surprising about it?

   d. What have you found to be the best way to address other people's mistaken ideas about how best to promote students' high academic achievement? What techniques have you seen work successfully in getting others to shift their perspective when they hold mistaken assumptions about best practices?

   e. What implications do these myths have for how we teach? . . . for how we work with one another as colleagues? . . . for how we partner with parents/guardians/caregivers and community members?

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ACTIVITY #2
# MYTH-BUSTING JIGSAW GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

## MYTH-BUSTING JIGSAW GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

| | Myth | Page Numbers | What Is False About This Statement? | What Research or Theory Do We Have to Refute the Statement? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intelligence is stable and largely hereditary. | 5-7 (paper)<br>179-182 (chapter) | | |
| 2 | If I praise my students for being smart, they will work harder. | 6-7 (paper)<br>179-180 (chapter) | | |
| 3 | Some students are lazy and simply can't be motivated. | 4, 9-10, & 13-15 (paper)<br>175-179, 181-182 (chapter) | | |
| 4 | Students naturally learn how to stay focused and remain on-task | 18-21 (paper)<br>186-193 (chapter) | | |

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# MYTH-BUSTING JIGSAW GRAPHIC ORGANIZER CONTINUED

| | Myth | Page Numbers | What Is False About This Statement? | What Research or Theory Do We Have to Refute the Statement? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | It is best to view all students "as individuals" or "as people," which necessitates ignoring their racial, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, gender, and sexual differences when it comes to learning. | 11-14 (paper)<br>182 (chapter) | | |
| 6 | If we can teach students that stereotypes aren't true, we can eliminate stereotypes' ill effects. | 11-12 (paper)<br>181-182 (chapter) | | |
| 7 | Some students of color purposefully fail school to avoid "acting white." | 14-15 (paper) | | |
| 8 | If I give my students more choice and control in the classroom they'll only waste time, socialize, and squander the opportunity | 23-32 (paper)<br>193-200 (chapter) | | |
| 9 | | | | |
| 10 | | | | |

**MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT**
**ACTIVITY #3**
# FISHBOWL CONVERSTATION
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

# FISHBOWL CONVERSATION: APPLYING THE CONCEPTS IN PRACTICE

**Estimated time to complete:** 45-60 minutes

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Flipchart or projector to display focus question and record participants' ideas

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Divide participants into two equal groups, A and B.

2. Arrange chairs to create an inner and outer circle. Have members of Group A sit facing one another in the inner circle with Group B sitting in the outer circle facing inward toward Group A.

3. Instruct Group A to engage in an open discussion using this prompt (written on a flipchart or displayed on a screen): *What practices might we need to change to make our classrooms and our school more student-centered, engaging, and motivating?* Group A converses about the issue while Group B is silent and taking notes on what they hear discussed.

4. At the end of 10 minutes, have the groups move so that Group B is in the inner circle and Group A sits in the outer ring. Group B should now take up the topic where Group A left off, carrying it further and deeper and noting contributions made by Group A.

5. At the end of another 10 minutes, have the members of Group B in the inner circle turn their chairs to face members of Group A. In pairs or quads, the two groups should talk together about their ideas, plans, and concerns. After five minutes or so, have one person from each group contribute one key idea to the whole group and record that idea on chart paper.

6. As an extension activity, have the groups also consider one specific step they might take in their own classrooms tomorrow or in the next week to facilitate more student-centered, engaging, and motivating learning opportunities for their students.

NOTE: This activity is adapted from page 6 of the "Kappan Professional Development Guide" written by Lois Brown Easton, and associated with volume 93, issue 3 of the *Phi Delta Kappan*, available at kappanmagazine.org.

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# PEELING THE ONION: A PROTOCOL TO PLACE THE WORK IN CONTEXT

**Estimated time to complete: 45-60 minutes**

## MATERIALS REQUIRED:

> Flipchart or projector to display the main prompt (in italics below or use slide provided)

> A copy of **Peeling the Onion Protocol** for each participant

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Display and read aloud the following question:
   *In this era of budget cuts, large class sizes, benchmark tests, pacing calendars, high-stakes exams, and the Common Core, what are some ways we can effectively implement student-centered learning practices that are focused on motivation, engagement, and student voice? In other words, how can this student-centered learning work be done within our current context?*

2. Then ask, by show of hands, how many of the gathered participants wondered about this as they were reading the paper or chapter. Acknowledge their concerns and inform them that they will be using a protocol today to organize a conversation to address such issues and develop solutions.

3. Explain to the participants that the purpose of this protocol is to provide a structured way to develop an appreciation for the complexity of a problem, and also to avoid the inclination of many groups to start out immediately "solving" the problem at hand (which may not be the real problem at all) or rejecting the possibility of any viable solutions.

4. Break them into groups of 5-6 participants and have them sit at tables to facilitate dialogue and distribute the **Peeling the Onion Protocol**. Continue to display the question above on screen or on a flipchart so that all participants can see it during the activity.

NOTE: This activity is adapted from page 67 of: McDonald, J.P., N. Mohr, A. Dichter & E.C. McDonald. 2003. *The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

# PEELING THE ONION PROTOCOL

tools

1. **Sharing the problem (3 minutes):** Each group should come up with one issue they want to explore that creates challenges to implementing student-centered approaches in their current context and then should raise some key questions or considerations related to it (e.g., how to do the work suggested by the paper when the pressures of accountability often force pedagogical approaches that run contrary to what we know about how students best learn, how they generate motivation, and how they stay engaged).

2. **Free-write (2 minutes):** Have everyone free-write silently on the issue using the prompt above as the primary thought-generator.

3. **Listening and peeling (5 minutes):** Select a presenter from each group. Ask the presenter to withdraw from verbal participation in the group in order to focus on taking notes on the group's discussion for later use. The group should then "peel the onion" by using one of these sentence starters below (also displayed on screen or on an additional flipchart). Participants should thoroughly discuss what one participant said in response to the starter before going on to what someone else responds. They may concur, differ, offer comments, ask questions, suggest examples, or provide details.

   a. "The most important things that I heard said about this issue are . . ."

   b. "One assumption that seems to be part of the problem/dilemma is . . ."

   c. "One thing I assume to be true about this problem is . . ."

4. **Peeling and probing (5 minutes):** As the presenter continues to listen silently and take notes, the group should "peel the onion" to a deeper level by using any of these sentence starters, discussing one idea before going on to another:

   a. "A question this raises for me is . . ."

   b. "Further questions this raises for me are . . ."

   c. "What if . . .?"

   d. "Have we thought about . . .?"

   e. "I wonder . . ."

5. **Getting to the core (5 minutes):** As the presenter continues to listen silently and take notes, the group continues to "peel the onion" at an even deeper level by using any of these sentence starters, discussing one idea before going on to another:

   a. "In general, we seem to be saying . . ."

   b. "To summarize what we're thinking . . ."

   c. "One conclusion we are drawing . . ."

   d. "One consistent area of disagreement we have uncovered is . . ."

6. **Response (5 minutes):** The groups now remain silent while the presenter speaks. The presenter should verbally reflect on what the group has said by beginning with these sentence starters:

   a. "I heard you saying that X is not possible for the following reasons . . ."

   b. "I hear you saying that our ability to apply this research in our classrooms and school is obstructed by the following barriers . . ."

   c. "I heard you describe several solutions for how to overcome these barriers and they were . . ."

   d. "When I hear your responses, I wonder . . ."

   e. "When I hear your reactions, it makes me think . . ."

7. **Debriefing (5 minutes):** Ask the whole group to debrief the process and continue the dialogue as long as there is time to do so. Work to identify specific solutions, timelines, and responsible parties so that the ideas generated are effectively translated into action plans. If time permits, ask "What other 'onions' are there to peel in our work together?"

MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT
ACTIVITY #5
CHECKING IN BEFORE THEY CHECK OUT
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

# CHECKING IN BEFORE THEY CHECK OUT: AN INSTRUMENT TO HELP IDENTIFY FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENT (DIS)ENGAGEMENT

**Estimated time to complete:** 45-60 minutes

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Checking In Before They Check Out worksheet

> The Social and Individual Aspects of Engagement figure

> Flipchart or projector/screen

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1.  Ask participants to have the Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice paper or "Prioritizing Motivation and Engagement" book chapter out and available for consultation during the following exercise. Remind participants that:

    a. A student's decision to engage or disengage from school is seldom based on a single factor (*see* The Social and Individual Aspects of Engagement *handout or page 17 of the paper*).

    b. Engagement is a complex relational phenomenon that has far more to do with the existence of supportive contexts and inviting opportunities than the individual's innate abilities.

    c. In short, engagement is what happens in the classroom when we have done our job well.

2.  Distribute the Checking In Before They Check Out worksheet to each participant. Read the directions at the top of the page aloud. Ask participants to complete the worksheet silently and individually. Allow 7-8 minutes for this.

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3. Then ask participants to pair up, ideally with a colleague who shares some or many of the same students. Explain that they will be given a series of prompts to guide them through a discussion about the ratings they have recorded and what those ratings suggest about our work. Allow a minute or two for participants to arrange furniture to facilitate these conversations, then proceed with displaying the following questions on the screen or flipchart:

   a. What do your ratings suggest about this student's most and least promising experiences in school? How might those experiences help shape this student's level of (dis)engagement in school? (Allow approximately 10 minutes for this.)

   b. After discussing these experiences with your colleague, consider where and when in the student's daily experiences at school s/he (likely) experiences the greatest and the least motivating and engaging contexts, activities, and interactions. How might you and your colleagues build on some of the areas that seem optimal and/or improve the areas that seem problematic? (Allow approximately 7-8 minutes for this.)

   c. How might the analysis of your individual student yield insights that transfer beneficially into other students' experiences and needs? In other words, how might we extrapolate from the individual situations you've discussed to identify larger trends or solutions that would benefit greater numbers of students at our school? (Allow approximately 5-6 minutes for this.)

4. Explain that you will now move the conversation from the individual to the school level. Ask pairs to join other nearby pairs to form groups of 4-6 participants. Instruct them to appoint a recorder and a speaker (two different people) for each group and be prepared to share their responses with the full gathering. Then display the following question on the flipchart or screen:

   *Based on what you learned and discussed, what practices or solutions have you identified that would benefit both your individual student of concern as well as other students with similar patterns of (dis)engagement at our school?* (Allow approximately 10-12 minutes for this.)

5. Toward the end of the allotted time, ask the recorders to write several of their main ideas on the board or flipchart at the front of the room. When all groups have recorded their ideas, have each speaker briefly explain what was recorded. Note differences and similarities, and reference the research on (dis)engagement in the paper or chapter when pertinent. If participants note other factors that shape (dis)engagement that might have been left out of the worksheet, note those as well. (Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for this.)

6. To close, highlight specific practices that are suggested by their work and how they may be enacted in classrooms and in the school writ large. Urge participants to be as tangible and specific as possible by asking questions such as:

   a. What can be done tomorrow?

   b. What can be done this week?

   c. What can be done this semester?

   d. What can be done this year?

   e. Who is ideally positioned to do this work?

   f. What supports and/or resources do these people need to be able to do it well?

   g. What are we willing to commit to doing?

   h. How will we know when it is working (or not working)?

   i. When should we check back in with one another to discuss progress?

   (Allow approximately 10-15 minutes for this.)

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# CHECKING IN BEFORE THEY CHECK OUT

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## CHECKING IN BEFORE THEY CHECK OUT

| Name of Student: | Name of Teacher: | Date: |
|---|---|---|

**Directions:** Imagine you are the student named above who is experiencing your specific class as well as your school in general. Then read each prompt and decide whether the statement is *never true*, *rarely true*, *sometimes true*, or *frequently true* for that student. Be prepared to discuss your ratings and the reasons for them with your colleagues.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Frequently** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Sometimes** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Rarely** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Never** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | **Self-regulation** I know many strategies to set goals, remain focused, stay organized, self-monitor, self-evaluate, give self-consequences, rehearse, and review. I can catch myself when I'm not focused and I know what to do to get back on track. | **Student Voice** I am able to express my opinions and am pushed to explain the reasons for why I think like I do. I am also given opportunities to participate in and even lead efforts to improve aspects of my class, school, and/or community. | **Cultural Responsiveness** Who I am at home or who I am with friends feels a lot like who I am in this class or at school. My teacher "gets" what it's like to be a person like me, and I feel like I belong in this classroom community. | **Prosocial Behaviors** When I act out at school, my teachers understand that my behavior is a symptom of a problem more than the problem itself, and they work with me to change both my own decision making and the context in which those behaviors occur. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Frequently** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Sometimes** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Rarely** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Never** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | **Competence** I know I am good at something I do at school. | **Rigor** I feel challenged more than I feel bored at school. | **Relatedness** My teacher knows me and understands many of my interests, hopes, worries, skills, and confusions. | **Relevance** The content we study matters to me and captures my interest because I can see its relevance to my life. |

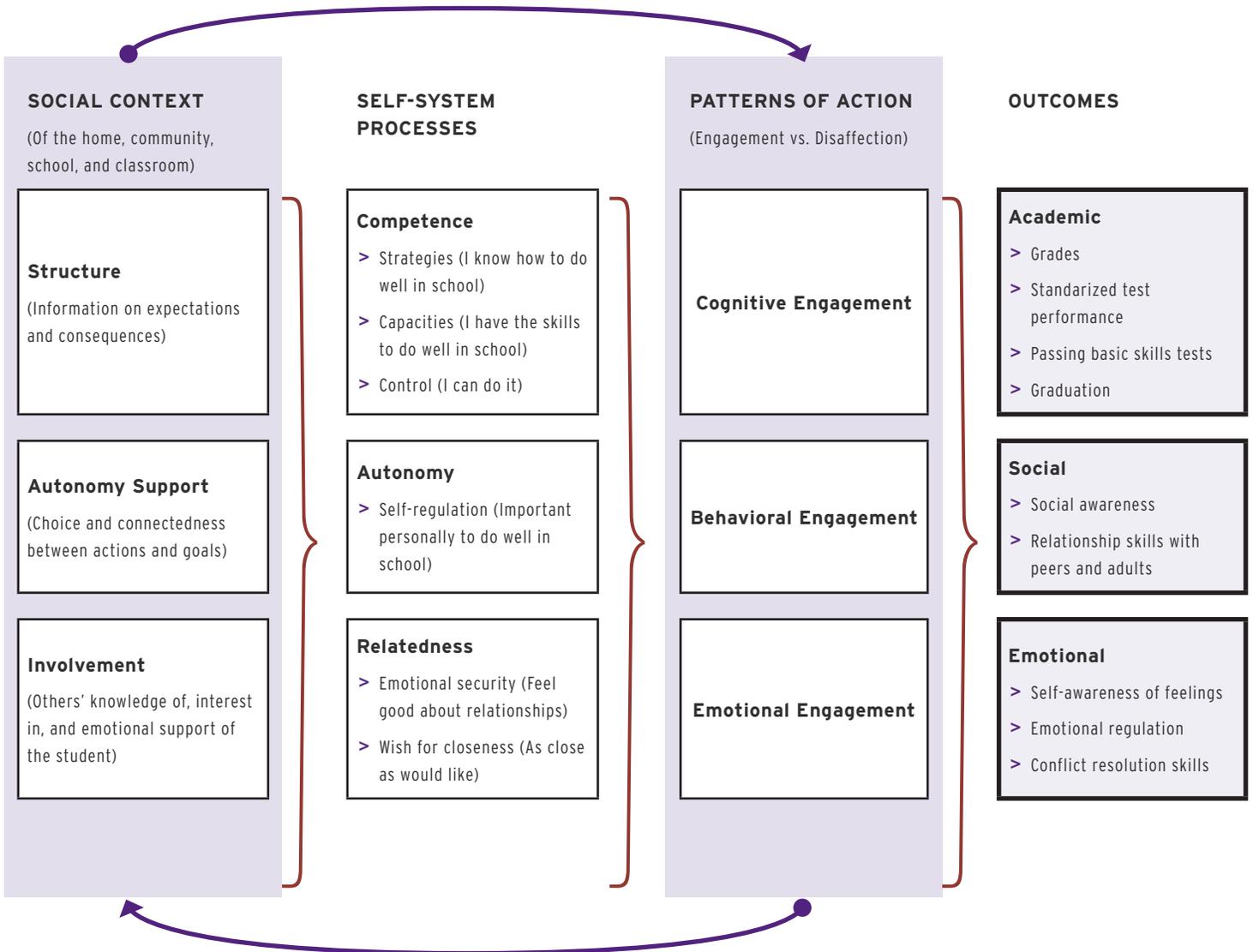| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Frequently** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Sometimes** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Rarely** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **Never** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | **Autonomy** I get to choose what I want to do in school and how I do it and those decisions help me to do my best. | **Peer Influence** My friends support me to do well in school and I am learning how to interact well with peers I may not know very well yet. | **Technology** I use computers, smart-phones, tablets, and iPods and I do not allow them to dominate my attention. When it's time to focus, my teachers help me to turn off these distractions so I can do my best work. | **Intelligence and Efficacy Beliefs** I understand that the harder I work, the more I will achieve. I trust that I can succeed in this activity/class. I get smarter and more skilled when I meet challenges with effort. |

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# THE SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF ENGAGEMENT

resource

**SOCIAL CONTEXT**

(Of the home, community, school, and classroom)

**Structure**

(Information on expectations and consequences)

**Autonomy Support**

(Choice and connectedness between actions and goals)

**Involvement**

(Others' knowledge of, interest in, and emotional support of the student)

**SELF-SYSTEM PROCESSES**

**Competence**

> Strategies (I know how to do well in school)

> Capacities (I have the skills to do well in school)

> Control (I can do it)

**Autonomy**

> Self-regulation (Important personally to do well in school)

**Relatedness**

> Emotional security (Feel good about relationships)

> Wish for closeness (As close as would like)

**PATTERNS OF ACTION**

(Engagement vs. Disaffection)

**Cognitive Engagement**

**Behavioral Engagement**

**Emotional Engagement**

**OUTCOMES**

**Academic**

> Grades

> Standarized test performance

> Passing basic skills tests

> Graduation

**Social**

> Social awareness

> Relationship skills with peers and adults

**Emotional**

> Self-awareness of feelings

> Emotional regulation

> Conflict resolution skills

SOURCE: From p. 380 of Appleton, J.J., Christenson, S.L., & Furlong, M.J. 2008. "Student Engagement with School: Critical Conceptual and Methodological Issues of the Construct." Psychology in the Schools. Vol. 45, No. 5.

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MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT
**ACTIVITY #6**
# LOCATING OUR WORK
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

# LOCATING OUR WORK: NAMING AND RATING OUR STUDENT VOICE ORIENTED ACTIVITIES

**Estimated time to complete:** 60-90 minutes

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Copy of the Spectrum of Student Voice Oriented Activity figure for each participant (chart can also be found on page 24 of paper or 194 of book)

> Discussion prompts on flipcharts or projected on screen

**BRINGING IN STUDENT VOICE**

Consider selecting and inviting student representatives to attend this meeting and contribute to this activity. Have these students work on the prompts below in their own group and present to the educators their own ratings and the rationale/evidence for their decisions. If there are differences between what the educators rated and noted and what the students rated/noted, highlight those on a flipchart or board and use the gaps in perception to explore issues of motivation, engagement, and student voice.

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Ask participants review the chart on page 24 of *Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice*, page 194 of "Prioritizing Motivation and Engagement," or hand out copies of the Spectrum of Student Voice Oriented Activity figure.

   **OPTIONAL**, if there's time and facilitator wants to reinforce key themes and concepts from the paper:

   a. Ask a participant to read aloud the extracted text at the bottom of page 23 of Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice, then ask everyone to pair up and discuss their answers to these two questions (allow 3-4 minutes for their discussions):

      i. Why might some claim that student voice is "countercultural"?
      ii. Why might we claim that it is "commonsensical"?

   b. Briefly poll the room to get a sense of how participants are framing student voice, the goal being to underscore the importance of agency, autonomy, and self-regulation in student learning (3-4 minutes of conversation).

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2. Refer participants to the figure. Ask them to mark on the chart where they believe certain aspects of the school lie on the continuum, using the legend below (allow 2-3 minutes for this). The prompt for this is, "Where do you think _____ lies on the continuum, and what evidence do you have for this rating?" The symbols to use are:

S = **S**chool-level governance
G = student **G**overnment
D = your **D**epartment
C = your **C**lass (pick one if you teach several subjects)
L = a specific **L**esson you taught in the last week
E = an **E**xtracurricular activity or afterschool program with which you are familiar

3. Organize everyone into groups consisting of 4-5 participants. Have each group appoint a *facilitator* (who watches time and keeps the group focused), a *recorder* (who writes down key points in the discussion and gives them to the reporter), and a *reporter* (who later reports out the main aspects of the group's conversation to the larger group), then ask the remaining one or two group members to begin the conversation by selecting which of the six aspects (S, G, D, C, L, or E, as listed above) they want to discuss first. The facilitator then refers to the questions below (posted on flipcharts or projected on screen) to help sustain the conversation. When one aspect has been exhausted, groups should choose another until the allotted time runs out (allow 12-15 minutes for the conversation; groups may only have time to discus one or two aspects). The prompts for the group discussion are:

   a. What practices and approaches have you observed that support your rating?

   b. If you are satisfied with where that particular aspect sits on the continuum, what reasons or evidence can you supply that can account for that satisfaction and the success it implies? Who might disagree with you and how might you respond to their critiques?

   c. If you are unsatisfied with that rating, what might you and your colleagues do to push your work further to the right-hand side of the continuum? What support would you need to do that work, and who is best situated to provide that support? Who would you need to involve in this work and how might it be done judiciously and expeditiously?

4. Before engaging in a whole-group dialogue, poll participants to find out where the majority marked their ratings. Use these prompts to do so efficiently and visually:

   a. Raise your hand if you recorded three or more of the aspects in the "Expression" or "Consultation" zones of the continuum.

   b. Raise your hand if you recorded three or more of the aspects in the "Participation" or "Partnership" zones of the continuum.

   c. Raise your hand if you recorded three or more of the aspects in the "Activism" or "Leadership" zones of the continuum. Two or more? One?

**IF STUDENTS ARE PRESENT . . .**

. . . make sure to ask them to share their ratings and record them separately.

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5. Lead a whole-group dialogue in which you ask the following questions:

   a. In general, what level of student voice are we facilitating at our school?

   b. Where might we find the most voice-oriented aspects of our work with youth in this school?

   c. Where might we find the least voice-oriented aspects of our work?

   d. What specific practices or projects would help move more ratings to the right side of the chart?

   e. Given these insights, where should we concentrate our work? What should we do first? Who should do it? What supports and resources do these folks need? When should we meet again to discuss progress and results? Who should be involved in the planning and evaluation of these practices?

6. Conclude by re-articulating specific plans that people mentioned and the people who have committed to making them happen, then identify a date in the future where concerned parties will reconvene to assess progress.
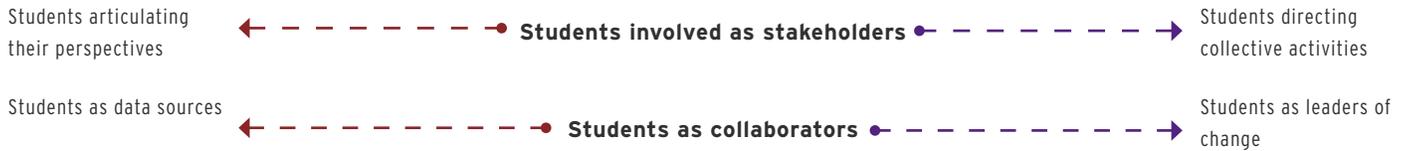
**IF STUDENTS ARE PRESENT . . .**

. . . ask them how they might agree or disagree with the assessments noted thus far.

. . . ask them to contribute ideas and provide feedback on the ones adults generate.

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# SPECTRUM OF STUDENT VOICE ORIENTED ACTIVITY

resource

Students articulating their perspectives ← – – – – → **Students involved as stakeholders** ● – – – – → Students directing collective activities

Students as data sources ← – – – – → **Students as collaborators** ● – – – – → Students as leaders of change

| Expression | Consultation | Participation | Partnership | Activism | Leadership |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Volunteering opinions, creating art, celebrating, complaining, praising, objecting | Being asked for their opinion, providing feedback, serving on a focus group, completing a survey | Attending meetings or events in which decisions are made, frequent inclusion when issues are framed and actions planned | Formalized role in decision making, standard operations require (not just invite) student involvement, adults are trained in how to work collaboratively with youth partners | Identifying problems, generating solutions, organizing responses, agitating and/or educating for change both in and outside of school contexts | (Co-)Planning, making decisions and accepting significant responsibility for outcomes, (co-)guiding group processes, (co-)conducting activities |

**Most student voice activity in schools/classrooms resides at this end of the spectrum.**

The need for adults to share authority, demonstrate trust, protect against co-optation, learn from students, and handle disagreement **increases** from left to right.

Students' influence, responsibility, and decision-making roles **increase** from left to right.

SOURCE: Toshalis, Eric & Michael Nakkula. 2012. *Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice: The Students at the Center Series*. Boston, MA: Jobs for the Future. http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/topics/motivation-engagement-and-student-voice.

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**MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT**
ACTIVITY #7
# LISTENING AND SHIFTING
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

## LISTING AND SHIFTING: EXAMINING AND IMPROVING OUR PRACTICES

**Estimated time to complete:** 45-60 minutes

### MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Copy of the **Instead of . . . Try This . . .** activity and worksheet for each participant

> Flipchart or projector/screen

### FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put participants in groups of four or five. Explain that the activity they are about to engage in assumes that everyone is committed to constant improvement in their teaching and is ready, willing, and able not just to critique and collaborate but also to provide specific suggestions for how to do this work better. Also explain that the paper identifies some practices that are problematic when based on what we have discovered through research.

2. Use the PowerPoint slides (A7_instead of, try this slides.pptx) to walk participants through the first several cells of the worksheet, pausing for questions, elaboration, and clarification. Push participants to identify the concepts and research that support the practices in the chart.

3. Then, distribute the **Instead of . . . Try This . . .** worksheet to each participant and ask groups to collectively construct at least three more rows on their own. Give them 12-15 minutes to do this, then have each group report out what they constructed and how it connects to the paper.

# INSTEAD OF... TRY THIS... ACTIVITY

tools

| INSTEAD OF . . . | TRY THIS . . . |
|---|---|
| Praising students for how "smart" they are . . . | Talk with students about how hard they worked, what strategies they used, what they overcame, how they struggled but persisted, and what they intend to do to build on their success. |
| Getting discouraged that some students don't seem to want to learn or care about their education or are afraid of being labelled negatively by their peers due to their success at school . . . | Identify which parts of their schooling experiences might cause some students to separate academic success from their identity and home culture. |
| Feeling frustrated that some students are not motivated enough or not engaging in school sufficiently . . . | Examine the contexts, experiences, and beliefs of those student to determine where they do express motivation and in which activities they are engaged. |
| Grouping students by their skill/performance levels . . . | Develop, scaffold, and monitor an assignment/project in which heterogeneously grouped students all have ways to contribute and help one another achieve. |
| Saying, "Pay attention". . . | Say, "Think about how you're managing distractions right now and which strategies you might use to re-focus." |
| Grading based only on correct answers and requiring student to "show their work" . . . | Ask students to describe the strategies they used to arrive at their answer and then work with a partner to evaluate the correctness or accuracy of the answer they generated. |
| Asking individuals or groups "How's it going?" as a way of checking on their progress . . . | Ask individuals or groups to show you which portions of their work they are most confident about, and which might still require futher inquiry and effort; then ask them what they plan to do to move forward. |

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# INSTEAD OF... TRY THIS... WORKSHEET

tools

| INSTEAD OF . . . | TRY THIS . . . |
|---|---|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
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**MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT**
**ACTIVITY #8**
# EXTENDING THE LEARNING, EXPANDING THE IMPACT
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

# EXTENDING THE LEARNING, EXPANDING THE IMPACT

**Estimated time to complete:** 45-60 minutes

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Extending the Learning grid for all participants with a version of it projected on screen or written on a flipchart for everyone to see

> Flipchart or projector/screen

> Poster-sized version of the grid; markers or sticky notes

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Have participants gather in groups or pairs. Ask them to consider what they've learned and what they've discussed in the sessions relating to this paper, then work to complete the first three columns of the Extending the Learning chart. The fourth column should have a blank title cell at the top, to be revealed later. Participants are to identify:

    a. Who needs to know the information in the paper and the ideas generated in their discussions about it;

    b. What specifically each of those groups or individuals needs to learn; and

    c. How each of them will learn this new information.

2. Once the groups have completed the grid at their tables, ask them to post their ideas on the larger poster-sized grid you've hung prominently in the room (also with the fourth column as yet untitled).

3. When everyone's ideas have been posted and reviewed, add a title to the fourth column—"**WHO WILL DO THIS**"—and instruct participants to write this title into their own charts. Instruct participants to record in that fourth column the names of people who agree to lead the effort to collaborate with others and extend the impact of the Students at the Center project. Then set a date on which you will follow up with the participants to discuss those contacts and accomplishments and write that date(s) within the fourth column.

4. Conclude by agreeing to meet again in X number of weeks/months to check on participants' progress and generate additional support.

# EXTENDING THE LEARNING

tools

| WHO NEEDS TO KNOW | WHAT THEY NEED TO KNOW | HOW THEY'LL LEARN IT | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

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**MOTIVATION, ENGAGEMENT, AND STUDENT VOICE TOOLKIT**
**ACTIVITY #9**
# SURVEY POST-TEST WITH DEBRIEFING
By Eric Toshalis and Michael J. Nakkula

MAY 2013

# LIKERT SURVEY POST-TEST WITH PAIR-SHARE AND COLLECTIVE DEBRIEFING

**Estimated time to complete:** 45-60 minutes

## MATERIALS REQUIRED

> Flipchart or projector to display prompts and record participants' responses

## FACILITATION INSTRUCTIONS

Using the same Pre/Post Survey completed in Activity #1, have participants use a different colored pen, pencil, or marker to fill out the survey again. Once they have done this, have them pair up with a colleague to share and compare their responses to the survey, focusing particularly on any changes between their pre-test and post-test. Ask:

1. Where were your shifts in thinking?

2. What caused you to think differently?

3. Were there any big differences between how you and your partner responded to the prompts in the survey? If so, how do you explain those differences?

4. What do these shifts in thinking suggest about practices we might change to better reflect the research?

5. What other issues does this raise for you?

6. Based on this, how should we proceed as a faculty?

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