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The 5 Dimensions of Engaged Teaching: A Practical Guide for Educators

By Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *The 5 Dimensions of Engaged Teaching: A Practical Guide for Educators* by Laura Weaver and Mark Wilding. *The 5 Dimensions of Engaged Teaching* supports K–12 educators as they equip their students to be resilient, well-rounded individuals who can excel academically, communicate effectively, and work compassionately and effectively with classmates and teachers. The Engaged Teaching Approach focuses on the development of the whole student and the whole teacher and recognizes that educators need to offer more than lesson plans and assessments if students are to thrive in the 21st century.

This guide is organized by chapter, so that readers can either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or by an entire team to identify key points; raise questions for consideration; assess conditions in a particular classroom, school or district; and suggest steps that might be taken to promote academic, emotional, and social learning.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your classroom, school, or district.

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Chapter 1

Engaged Teaching

1. What is the Engaged Teaching Approach and what are its foundational roots? How can this approach support you to do what you are already doing, rather than becoming another “add on”?
2. How does the Engaged Teaching Approach enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom?
3. Consider the Five Dimensions of Engaged Teaching. How are these dimensions present in your school or classroom currently? How would you like to develop these dimensions in yourself and your students in the future?
4. How are the academic, emotional, and social dimensions of teaching and learning connected? How do you see this expressed in your own classroom? How can the connections between these different dimensions of development be strengthened to support learning and safety outcomes?

Chapter 2

Cultivating an Open Heart

1. What do the authors mean by cultivating an open heart? What role does an open heart play in teaching and learning? What are some of the challenges and opportunities associated with this dimension?
2. What are the personal and school-related factors that can prevent educators from opening their hearts? How can educators effectively work with or overcome these obstacles?
3. How does investing in community and relationship building impact the quality of student learning?
4. What particular community- and relationship-building principles and practices feel most applicable and relevant to you in your setting?
5. What are the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching? What are some concrete ways that you can model cultural responsiveness in your interactions with students and colleagues?

Chapter 3

Engaging the Self-Observer

1. What does it mean to engage the self-observer? How can you develop the self-observer in yourself and foster this capacity in your students?
2. How can engaging the self-observer enhance your work with students and colleagues?
3. How does cultivating the self-observer help us to interrupt “trigger cycles” and the “amygdala hijack”?
4. Compare and contrast *single-loop* and *double-loop learning*. Which practice do the authors recommend to tackle stubborn challenges and why?
5. Teaching students to engage in self-observation engages their curiosity, inquiry, and reflection in a meaningful way. What specific practices can you use to cultivate the self-observer in your students?
6. How can you help students “see beyond grades” and discover more about themselves as learners?

7. What specific practices can help school teams strengthen their capacity to work together, learn from each other, and cultivate effective instructional practices?

Chapter 4

Being Present

1. What does it mean to *be present* in the classroom, in staff meetings, and with colleagues?
When do you feel most present in the classroom? What are the conditions that most support your full presence when you teach?
2. What might get in the way of our ability to be present in these settings?
3. What practices can you engage in to prevent your instruction from becoming robotic and rote?
4. What current practices do you engage in to promote or practice mindfulness in yourself or in your students? How can you adopt or adapt the mindfulness practices offered by the authors to meet your current situation?
5. Why is self-care important? How does it relate to student outcomes?
6. What activities do you currently utilize to foster learning readiness and engagement in your students? How can you adopt or adapt the authors' suggestions to keep students invigorated and active participants in their learning?

7. The demands of teaching and creating lesson plans can leave many teachers feeling that there is not time for meeting with colleagues. What practices can teachers employ to receive and give support to colleagues?

Chapter 5

Establishing Respectful Boundaries

1. What aspects of your current approach to classroom management are most effective for you? Where are the challenges?
2. How is the capacity to establish respectful boundaries related to our ability to cultivate and sustain an open heart in ourselves and in our classrooms?
3. What are some important aspects and practices of a proactive approach classroom management? What steps can you take to sustain this kind of approach in your own classroom?
4. Many schools are now required to create antibullying and harassment plans. What steps can you take to prevent and address issues of bullying and harassment both in your school and in the classroom?
5. According to the authors, “Inevitably in our collegial relationships, boundaries get crossed, conflict arises, buttons get pushed, emotions flare” (p. 83). What are some principles and practices that can support you to skillfully navigate conflict and effectively foster relationships with colleagues that are professional, compassionate, and intentional?

Chapter 6

Developing Emotional Capacity

1. What particular emotions tend to make you uncomfortable? How do you respond to this discomfort? How does this impact (if at all) your teaching and interactions with colleagues?
2. What role does emotional capacity play in teaching? How can you develop or expand your emotional range?
3. Students inevitably bring their emotional experiences into class. How can you promote a climate of emotional safety in the classroom?
4. What are some of the potential risks or costs of not acknowledging or addressing the emotional life of students in school?
5. According to the authors, “Reaching out to colleagues can go a long way toward creating a more caring and supportive adult learning community” (p. 104). What are some effective ways that staff members can share difficulties and challenges with colleagues?

6. What activities can you engage in with your colleagues that will improve the emotional intelligence of individuals and teams?

Chapter 7

The Learning Journey: Putting It All Together in the Classroom

1. How would you describe the Learning Journey in your own words? How can this developmental approach to the school year support you to engage and meet the needs of your students?
2. What are the three stages of the Learning Journey and the goals of each stage? How does this relate to what you are already cultivating in your classroom? Where might this Learning Journey approach shift your practice?
3. What are some effective ways for teachers to cultivate a caring community? What might be some of the benefits of making this investment?
4. What steps can you take to establish yourself as classroom leader?
5. Why is it important to create an intentional closure process for students at the end of the term or school year? How can you avoid “negative goodbyes”?
6. What difficulties can students experience during transitions? How can you support students as they make transitions?

Chapter 8

The Journey Is the Destination

1. What skills and capacities do you feel students need to succeed and thrive in the 21st century? How does your classroom or school support this? Where are the gaps or challenges?
2. What specific goals and objectives do you have for your students to prepare them for academic success and the demands of the 21st century global community? How do these connect to your school's improvement plan, mission, and vision?
3. What does it mean to you to lead from the inside out? What factors should you consider when creating your own approach to respond to the needs of your students and community?
4. After creating your personal “action plan” map, what benchmarks and will you use to gauge your progress towards these goals? What tools can you use to reflect and adjust your practices to meet your goals?
5. How can you effectively collaborate and build trust with other teachers or staff in order to give and receive feedback in supportive ways?

6. What are three simple actions you can take this month to begin to bring the Engaged Teaching Approach to your classroom or school?