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Five Paths of Student Engagement: Blazing the Trail to Learning and Success

By Dennis Shirley and Andy Hargreaves

Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *Five Paths of Student Engagement: Blazing the Trail to Learning and Success* by Dennis Shirley and Andy Hargreaves. *Five Paths of Student Engagement* provides an exploration of student engagement and strategies for enabling students to be as successful as possible.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to 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 an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create an engaging learning environment for students.

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Chapter 1

From Achievement to Engagement: Two Ages of Educational Change

1. What defined the *Age of Achievement and Effort* in education? What currently defines the *Age of Engagement, Well-Being, and Identity*? How do the two differ?
2. Before reading this chapter, how would you have defined *engagement*? How would you redefine it having read this chapter?
3. What is the relationship between engagement, curriculum content, and achievement? In what ways is engagement in schools more complex than one might assume?
4. What did educators learn from at-home teaching experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic? How can these findings be used to better education and engagement in the future?

Chapter 2

Theories of Engagement and Motivation: From Maslow to Flow

1. What are the three psychological dimensions of student engagement? Why is it necessary to utilize all three dimensions in order to maintain students' attention?
2. What four basic principles define the power of full engagement? How might you consciously implement and maintain these four principles in your classroom?
3. How do the authors define *mastery*? Do you feel you have mastery over anything? What does it take to master something?
4. Why is it important to include sociological perspectives on engagement, in addition to the psychological perspectives that have dominated the field? What advantages does a sociological approach to engagement have?

Chapter 3

Three Myths of Engagement: Relevance, Technology, and Fun

1. What is *relevance* in the context of student engagement? What are some pros and cons to the relevance approach?
2. What facets of classroom technology are often promoted in modern academic environments? Have you dabbled in any of these technologies? What did you learn from your experience?
3. What does digitally enhanced learning look like in action? What advantages does it offer for student engagement? Disadvantages?
4. How does *fun* fare as an engagement strategy? How do you think schools can avoid (as Ken Robinson says) killing creativity?

Chapter 4

The Five Enemies of Engagement: And How to Defeat Them

1. What are the five enemies of engagement? Have you experienced any of these in your classroom?
2. What causes alienated or *disconnected* learning? What instructional methods can be used to counter this type of learning?
3. What are the two extremes of *disassociation*? Why do these extremes tend to correspond with economic status?
4. What is the antidote to each type of disengagement? How can these antidotes be implemented in everyday instruction?

Chapter 5

Standardized Testing: The Archenemy of Engagement

1. How do *high-stakes* or *standardized tests* embody the five enemies of engagement?
2. What five negative side effects are exerted on students' learning and engagement by high-stakes or standardized tests? Which, if any, of these side effects have you seen in your school or classroom?
3. What is the intent behind *mid-stakes testing*, and how does it fail to solve the problems of high-stakes testing?
4. What assessment methods and strategies improve on high- and mid-stakes testing and lead to increased engagement and learning?

Chapter 6

The Five Paths of Student Engagement: In Theory and Practice

1. What are the five paths of student engagement? How does this framework benefit from the integration of both sociological and psychological perspectives?
2. Examine the accounts of the five paths of engagement from the Northwest Rural Innovation and Student Engagement network. Do any of these accounts stand out to you? How do the five paths of student engagement benefit these classrooms?
3. Based on the accounts mentioned above, as well as the information presented throughout the book, how can you implement the five paths of engagement into everyday instructional practice?
4. How does the addition of a sociological perspective increase the viability of the five paths of student engagement?