



## California Acceleration Project

Supporting California's 112 Community Colleges  
To Redesign their English and Math Curricula  
And Increase Student Completion

<http://cap.3csn.org>

### Attending to the Affective Domain

When developmental students aren't successful in their classes, the core issue is often *not* their ability to handle the course content. They have the capacity to write a good essay or solve a particular math problem; however, something happens at a more psychological and emotional level that gets in their way. When they encounter a difficult task, or receive critical feedback, or start to feel hopeless about their prospect of success, many community college students will disengage, withdraw effort, and even disappear from class.<sup>1</sup>

Being an effective teacher requires that we understand the dynamics behind student disengagement and other self-sabotaging behaviors, and that we have intentional practices in place to help students be successful. We have grouped strategies for addressing the affective domain into 6 categories, with sample strategies for each. This is a summary of a longer document available on our website.

#### 1. Establishing & Maintaining Positive Relationships

*Community-building activities (e.g. ice breakers, early group projects); building in time for one-on-one work with students; watching out for our own emotional reactions and establishing a routine for talking individually with students who are exhibiting behaviors that impede their own or other students' learning*

#### 2. Providing Class Time for Students to Process Content & Practice Skills

*Small group discussions, speed dating activities, student presentations, debates, independent and group activities in computer lab*

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<sup>1</sup> See Katie Hern's inquiry into the "Academic Sustainability Gap" in her Chabot accelerated classes: <http://www.cfkeep.org/html/stitch.php?s=19612639508781> ; Carol Dweck's article "Brainology" at <http://www.nais.org/publications/ismagazinearticle.cfm?ItemNumber=150509> ; and a good overview of "self-handicapping" and attribution theory at [http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/edPsybook/Edpsy5/edpsy5\\_attribution.htm](http://education.calumet.purdue.edu/vockell/edPsybook/Edpsy5/edpsy5_attribution.htm)

### **3. Regular Opportunities for Students' Metacognitive Reflection**

*Providing materials on topics connected to learning and asking students to write about how these connect to their experience; quick self-assessments connected to key assignments; longer self-reflection pieces; providing samples of strong student work and asking students to write about how they can improve their own performance next time*

### **4. Incentives and Accountability for Coming to Class and Doing the Work**

*"Fess up" routines for when students haven't done assignments, incentives for perfect attendance, firm policies on attendance, limitations on turning in late work*

### **5. Intrusively Intervening when Students Show Signs of Struggle or Disengagement**

*Keeping a "worry list" and reaching out by email, initiating one-on-one conversations after class; monitoring who has turned in work and touching base with those who haven't; asking students to reach out to those who miss class*

### **6. Maintaining a "Growth Mindset" Approach to Feedback and Grading**

*Syllabus policies that allow students to recover from a weak start; providing feedback that explicitly appreciates the thinking/skills students are exhibiting and guides them re: next things to work on; intentionally using re-do's and rewrites to foster growth; expectations that progress through major assignments over term*



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