Becoming an Academic Whisperer
Practical Strategies to Motivate First-Year Students

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Key Points & Takeaways

- Frame everything with student success!
- Use personal leadership development with students not just our colleagues
- A teaching mindset is just as important as a student mindset
- Mentor mentality (Guide on the side)
- PS-I’m not an academic whisperer but I’m trying!
I don’t want to be this guy!

LEARN and have FUN!

It’s meant to go beyond active learning

This presentation is really about connecting with Generation Z students
- Design I (2D) Comp Class
- Painting I (Watercolor)
- FY Seminar on Walt Disney
- eCore-Art Appreciation
...but wait a second...
My Teaching Mindset: Then

Content and Subject Matter
My Teaching Mindset: Now

- Emotional Intelligence
- Utilize Leadership Principles and Techniques in class
- Past Class Experiences
- Content and Subject Matter
- Understanding your natural strengths
FIRST DAY OF CLASS!
8AM CLASS?!?!

I’LL BE THERE AT 8:30AM!
I’D RATHER GOOF OFF
WITH FRIENDS!

made with mematic
SOME LACK MOTIVATION

AND WORK ETHIC!
DISAPPEARED FOR TWO WEEKS

WHAT DID I MISS?!?
NOPE, DIDN'T FEEL LIKE
READING TODAY
I STILL GET AN “A”

RIGHT?!?
BINGED WATCHED!
Generation Z Attributes

- They are the touchscreen generation.
- They speak with images
- They may assume that:
  - slow is bad
  - hard is bad
  - boring is bad
  - risk is bad
  - labor is bad
- They live in a world where terror is the norm
- They “multitask”
- They’re open-minded
- They can have a sense of entitlement
- They question the value of a college education
- Most Connected/Most Isolated
- Not enough “likes”? They’ll take a post down quickly!
- Most stressful time for them? Ride home from practice or game
Day 1 sets the tone...

Attitude (Emotional Intelligence) is more important than I.Q.

Assignments:
Spend as much time on the problem as you do the solution

Positive reinforcement:
“I believe in you”

“Your intelligence and talent do not determine your success in this class—your actions do.”
Dr. Saundra McGuire

Final Grades reflect actions… not just submitted assignments

Talent/Skill + Investment in class and your work = SUCCESS
Day 1 and the 20-60-20 Rule
Day 1: The 20-60-20 Rule

- Business principle used to handle misaligned employees
- It can be applied to any large group of people: neighborhood, church, office, etc
- Can be used as a framework for a class
- Explained on the first day of class
- Reinforced during the course of the semester
Day 1: The 20-60-20 Rule

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20% "Positives"
These students row in the direction of the class goal. They work hard and are always engaged in class.

60% "Middle"
These students have potential. They just need to be a bit more engaged, and need more encouragement from their professors.

20% "Negatives"
These students row against the course objectives. They may have time management skills and poor study skills.
Day 1: 20-60-20 as a framework...

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?

- **Growth Mindset**
  - I can learn anything I want to.
  - When I'm frustrated, I persevere.
  - I want to challenge myself.
  - When I fail, I learn.
  - Tell me I try hard.
  - If you succeed, I'm inspired.
  - My effort and attitude determine everything.

- **Fixed Mindset**
  - I'm either good at it, or I'm not.
  - When I'm frustrated, I give up.
  - I don't like to be challenged.
  - When I fail, I'm no good.
  - Tell me I'm smart.
  - If you succeed, I feel threatened.
  - My abilities determine everything.

- To explain a Growth Mindset vs Fixed Mindset
- Ask: *What story do you want to tell and what are you doing today to get you there?*
Day 1: 60% Middle: Being “average” means...
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You (the student) are the best of the worst...
Day 1: 60% Middle: Being “average” means...

...or worst of the best!

(Lou Holtz-Former Football Coach)
Day 1: Spend as much time on the problem as you do the solution!

Student receives the assignment...

Thinking! Brainstorming! Creative Options! Editing Ideas!

...but many students want to start here!

Solution!
Mid-Term Reminder...

20-60-20 Rule Painting I

Think about your overall performance in class so far. Where would you place yourself on the scale below?

- 20% Above Average
- 60% Average
- 20% Below Average

How can you continue to improve and what can I do to help you?
Where are you on the 20-60-20 scale for this class?

Top 20% ——— 0 ——— 60% ——— Bottom 20%

Mehly — There's no reason why you can't be a top 20% student.

Where are you on the 20-60-20 scale for your other classes (English, Math, Chemistry, etc.)?

Top 20% ——— 0 ——— 60% ——— Bottom 20%

Be careful of the absences!
20-60-20?
20-60-20?
20-60-20?
20-60-20?
20-60-20?

- Me!
- First Generation College Student
- B- High School Student
- Almost didn’t go to college!
- **SOLID 60%**
Clint is an assclown.
Working with the Negative 20%

- “Calm...Assertive...Energy” (Cesar Millan)
- Know your school policies
- Don’t take it personally (Emotional Intelligence)
- “Meet in the middle” mentality--Be willing to work with them
- Take notes and update your syllabus
- Try to cut off conflict before it happens (Explain grade appeal process, student conduct, etc. Don’t bury it in the syllabus)
- Midterm grades before the withdrawal date!
- Lead with compassion first…(but I still believe in “tough love”)
- Be aware that they could be dealing with mental health issues
The Positive 20% & Middle 60%

- Connect with them on a personal level—show them you care.
- Positive reinforcement goes a long way!
Connecting with students...

- Pop Culture!
- Talk about Music!
- Nicknames!
To Summarize Pt 1

- Frame everything with student success!
- Send individual emails of encouragement to your students
- Incorporate Leadership Development: MBTI and Strengths Quest Assessments
- Find out what motivates them (Bonus points works for me!)
- Tell stories...especially your story!
- Repackage life lessons using their frame of reference!
To Summarize Pt 2

- Think “forest” not “trees”
- Think like a parent
- From Caesar: Calm, Assertive, (Positive) Energy!
- From Caesar: Rehabilitate dogs and train people
- Be patient-It’s hard to teach maturity!
NOPE, DIDN’T FEEL LIKE READING TODAY

DISAPPEARED FOR TWO WEEKS WHAT DID I MISS?!!?
Sources & Inspiration...Books

The MAP
YOUR PATH TO EFFECTIVENESS IN LEADERSHIP, LIFE, AND LEGACY
KEITH M. EIGEL, PhD
KARL W. KUHNERT, PhD

TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO LEARN
Strategies You Can Incorporate Into Any Course to Improve Student Metacognition, Study Skills, and Motivation
Saundra Yancy McGuire with Stephanie McGuire

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE 2.0
“Succinctly explains how to deal with emotions creatively & employ our intelligence in a beneficial way.”
- THE DALAI LAMA
TRAVIS BRADBERRY & JEAN GREAVES

MARCHING OFF THE MAP
INSPIRE STUDENTS TO NAVIGATE A BRAND NEW WORLD
TIM ELMORE with ANDREW McPEAK
20-60-20 Rule

Leading and Motivating Teams in Higher Education

Dr. Patrick Sanaghan
Sources & Inspiration...Podcasts

LEADING THE NEXT GENERATION
WITH TIM ELMORE

ACCELERATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

HOSTED BY GROWING LEADERS
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