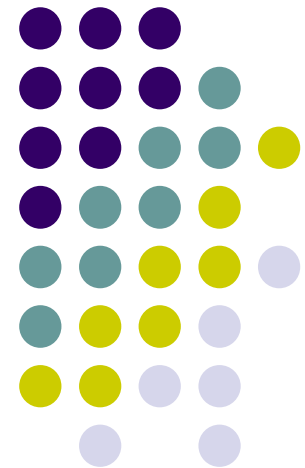


Engaging students in learning

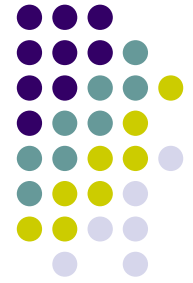
This will be personal!

How do *I* try to make learning motivating
and enjoyable and worthwhile

– and minimise dropout?



First, a little about *you*

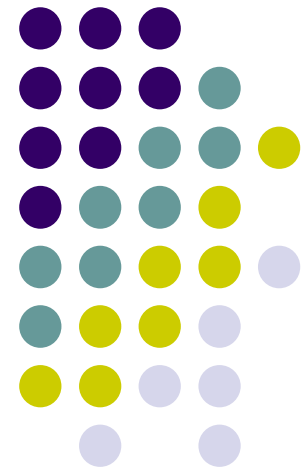


- For how many here are these questions of direct relevance? How many of you have to
 - try **explicitly** to make your classes motivating and enjoyable and worthwhile for your students?
 - – and plan to minimise dropout on your courses?

Today, typically I will tell wee stories

- leaving it to you, after that,
to draw your own conclusions,

with three brief occasions to discuss
your reactions with your neighbours



I'll offer each time: An assured piece of advice....

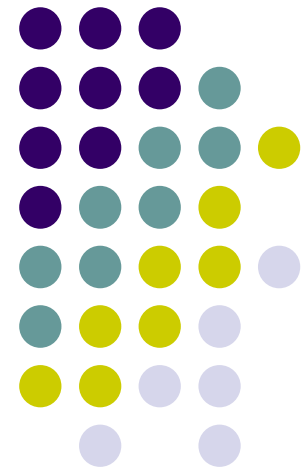


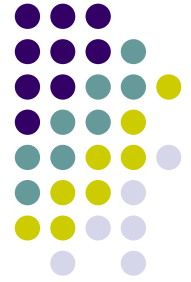
- Then an anecdotal justification or amplification
- **Please make marginal notes of anything that seems potentially useful to you**
- And keep an eye on the presentation PowerPoint, which will probably contain last minute adjustments

Not 10, but maybe 13, self-commandments

- certainly for John Cowan

[But what about you?
That's for *you* to decide]

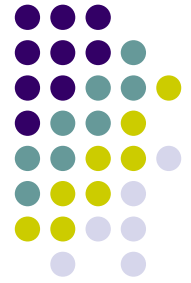




1. Use *examples* to explain

- To explain concepts, methods, criteria, tasks.....Don't describe, illustrate!
- That's what I'm trying to do here. Judge if it works for you, though
- Example 1: Reflective journaling. "You show me yours, and I'll show you mine" Especially when it goes wrong!

2. Make meaningful welcoming contact earlier than expected

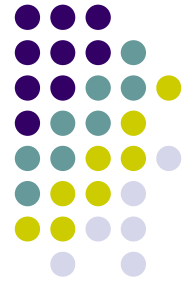


- Example 2 – getting in there first, especially in the VLE, to establish approachability
- Rogers on “trust”
- It’s important, especially in the VLE, to win such trust

3. Build in (worthwhile) fun



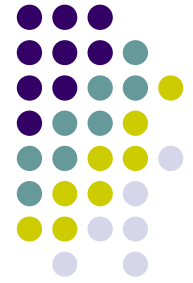
- Example 3: The students who didn't need to learn to describe
- With a bit of (anonymous) leg-pulling on some of the worst examples of non-communication, "So what can we work on, so that you'll do better next time, when it matters?"



4. Declare the workload

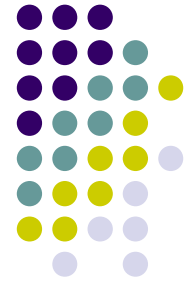
- - and especially advise them when it is demanding in terms of standard;
- Example 4: The (DL) students who needed to know:
 - Am I finding it difficult because I'm stupid – or is it just difficult?
 - What do other (immediate past) students advise on this – especially on the value of some learning?

5. Enable anonymous declaration, and resolution, of needs



- Example 5.1: OU tutorials with “passing the anonymous questions”
- Example 5.2: Anonymous postings to discussion board – and peer responses
- Note research on learning value for the peer who is assisting

Four minutes to discuss with your immediate neighbours



- Which of these ideas have potential in *our* situations?
- Are there any you follow already?
- Do they deliver results for you and for your students?

6. Nurture co-operative learning communities



- Example 6.1 (First year undergraduate): “Bring along a draft; it’s your entry ticket. And we’ll work on it.”
- Example 6.2 (First year postgraduate): “Find a peer to offer you helpful suggestions – and tell me what you did about them, and so enable me (if I wish) to enthuse directly to a helpful peer.”
- Students thus learning what *they* themselves can do to improve - by formatively advising peers.

7. Define criteria around “Sound Standard” – *with examples*



- Value words mean all things to all people; so
- Example 7:
 - Describe 55% **objectively**;
 - Give examples above and below;
 - Enable discussion of them, to rate them *objectively* and hence understand the criteria;
 - Call for declared *and objective* self-assessment on eventual submission, hence applying the criteria;
 - Respond accordingly

8. Put effort into *feedforward* rather than simply *feedback*



- - with opportunity to apply that advice
- Example 8: “Enquiry skills”
 - Forward advice to self for next module – for which student will be held accountable!
 - Objectively considered account of how well that went – discussed collegially
 - Regular metacognitive feedforward on own reflections on process – thinking about how to do what has to be done next

9. Make brief but meaningful contacts before submission dates



- Example 9.0 – “See you next week”
- Example 9.1 – JC as an OU tutor with high response rates
- Example 9.2 – JC as a Personal Development Tutor, for work-based learning
- Graham Gibbs’ research in OU regions

Four minutes again to discuss with your neighbours



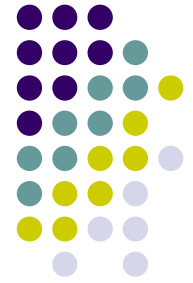
- Which of these ideas have potential in *your* situations?

10. Graduate the course demands



- No example
- This just makes sense
- Start from where they begin, and take them on – and upwards
- And make it clear that you are doing so as part of a sensible plan – not just tightening the screw!

11. Call for self-assessment of submitted work



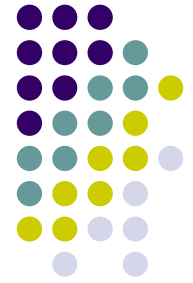
- - and follow up discrepancies!
- Example 11: “The Dirty Dozen”; and effect on their learning;
- – and then came Ashraf

12. Establish a question-asking culture



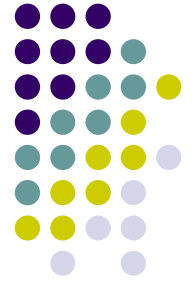
- And reward it in assessment!
- Example 12: Reaction to Postman and Weingartner
 - Do I *really* value question-asking students?
 - Do I reward question-asking?
 - How can I nurture question-asking?
 - And so the culture changed.
- With effect for my colleagues!

Four minutes again to discuss with your neighbours

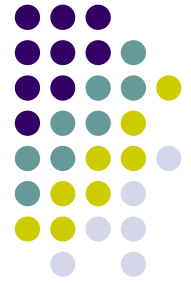


- Which of these ideas have potential in *your* situations?

Teaching – or learning?



- It's a switch in emphasis
- Example 14: A colleague's handwriting, and the moral



Follow-up

- I'm accessible at: J.Cowan@napier.ac.uk
- If I don't hear from anyone, I'll know I've not been much use to you;
- So please contact me with questions, requests and comments.
- Maybe best discuss with a neighbour, as you leave, what you need to think further about -
- - and what / need to think further about!