

Our Goals for Practice in Class

A checklist by students for teachers

Do we see the meaning and value in the material you introduce?

- You begin with a story, conflict, or puzzle that goes to the heart of it.
- You ask for ideas about how it might connect to our lives and interests.
- You introduce us to people whose work involves this knowledge or skill.
- You suggest class projects that would help us explore the material.
- You encourage us to adapt your project ideas, or propose our own.

Do we know what excellent work with this material looks like?

- You show us the work of real-world masters who use these ideas or skills.
- You share with us exemplary work by other students.
- You ask us for good examples we have seen outside of school.
- You write with us a clear rubric describing the qualities of good work.

Do we know what to practice so we can put our learning to use?

- You give us each a clear goal that we can expect to succeed at.
- You give us the chance to explore the material in different ways.
- You get us to tell you what we don't yet know.
- You break down what we have to learn into manageable parts or stages.

Do you know what we understand and don't understand?

- You listen while we explain things to each other.
- You have us write directions for how to do some part of the work.
- You arrange Socratic seminars, debates, and other ways to discuss the work.
- You use homework and pop quizzes for diagnosis but not for grades.

Do you coach us in what we don't yet understand?

- You have us play games that involve using the concepts and skills.
- You let us explore and discover in groups, through experiments and research.
- You have us demonstrate successful techniques to our peers.
- Your worksheets are short and give us only one thing to practice.
- You pair us up to practice skills together.
- You work with us one-on-one when we need it.
- You give us time in class for reading, writing, research, and problem solving.

Do you ask us to assess our progress and that of our peers?

- You have us assess ourselves on the basis of the rubric we developed together.
- You ask us to reflect on what new things we have learned.
- You ask us to describe where we need to practice more.
- You ask us to suggest what kind of help you need.
- You ask us for feedback on how to teach the material better.

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