



AUGUSTINIAN  
PEDAGOGY

# **Engagement through Augustinian Pedagogy**



# Presenters

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# Workshop Goals

Dialogue together about the struggles that challenge the resilience of contemporary teachers and students

Engage in Augustinian Reflection/Discernment about Augustinian teaching principles and apply the principles to your challenges

Create Augustinian pedagogy "engagement action items" for your ongoing learning journeys

# Take Aways



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Slide Deck PDF – Email

Activity Handout PDF – Email

Activity Input PDF - Email

DYI Workshop – YouTube Videos

Infographic PDF - Email

Activity Handout Word Doc – Email

# Faculty Engagement & Educational Development

**The Age of the Scholar** (1810 - 1960): Sabbatical leaves to develop faculty as scholars

**The Age of the Teacher** (1960s-1970s): Faculty, instructional, and organizational components in improving teaching effectiveness

**The Age of the Developer** (1980s): Faculty Development units emerge on campuses, initiatives on changing the state of undergraduate education from private foundations provide resources and motivation for innovation

**The Age of the Learner** (1990s - Present): Dramatic paradigm shift from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogical methods

**The Age of the Networker** (2000 - Present): Network with faculty and institutional leaders to meet the institutional challenges of the new century

# **Expanding the Horizon of Educational Development**

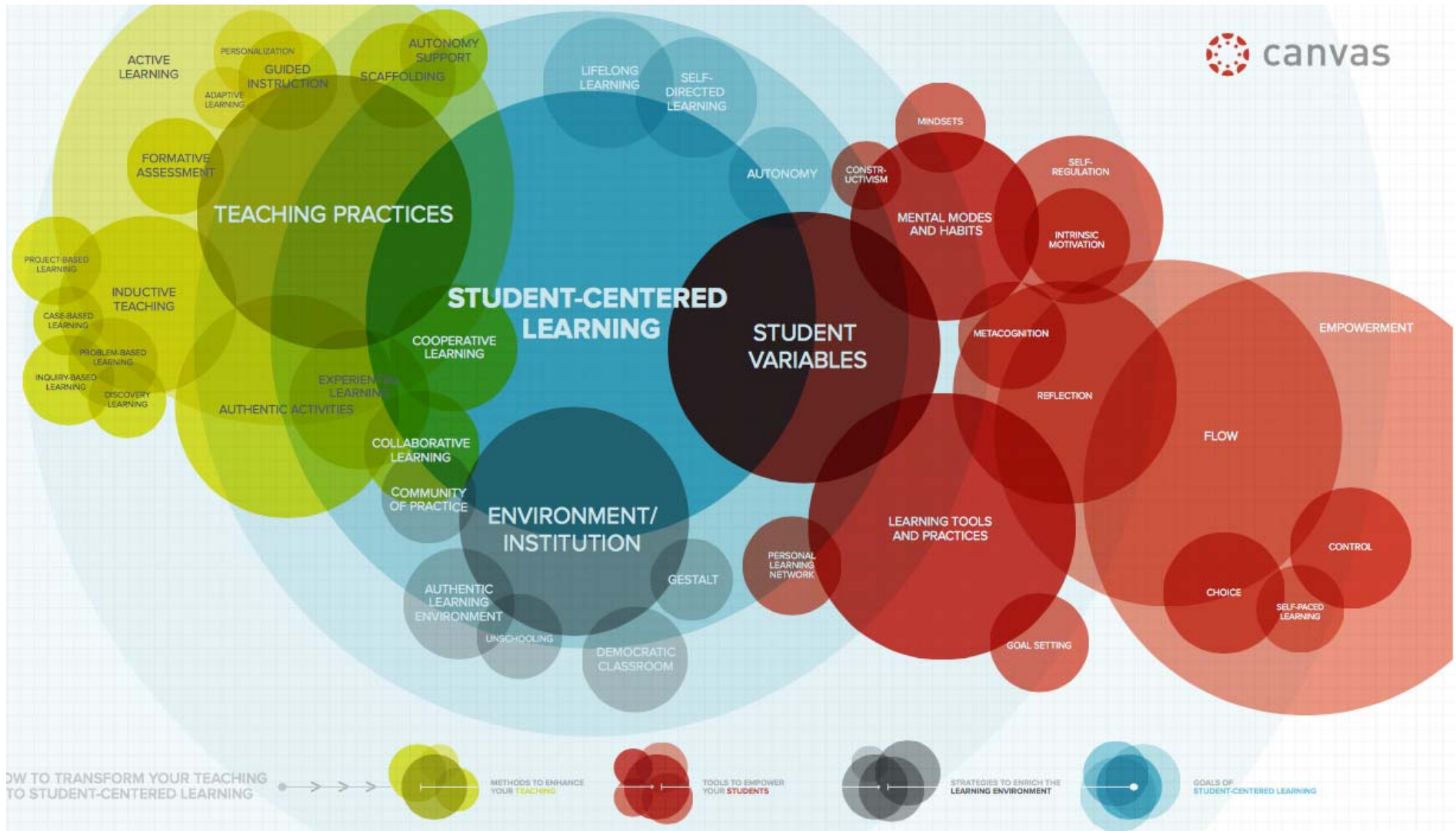
Balancing increasingly complex and demanding faculty roles

Assessment of teaching and student learning (especially in the context of increasingly diverse students)

The impact of technology

Addressing the needs of part-time faculty

The demands of interdisciplinary leadership development for chairs and institutions



# Student-centered pedagogical methods







**Should we be a  
*sage on the stage,*  
or a *guide on the side,*  
or the *architect of learning?*  
The answer is that teachers  
should be all of those.  
The *art* of teaching is figuring  
out when you should be  
which one.**

George Couros: [\*The Innovator's Mindset: Empower Learning, Unleash Talent, and Lead a Culture of Creativity\*](#)

# Professors Shouldn't Teach to Younger Versions of Themselves

Too many academics focus on ideal students rather than real ones.

By *Rebecca Schuman*



2.4k



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**Whoever our students may be,  
whatever the subject we teach,  
ultimately, we teach who we are.**

---

Parker Palmer

## **Generation on a Tightrope: A Portrait of Today's College Student (Levine & Dean, 2012).**

Today's undergraduates are the first generation of digital natives

Today's college students are the most diverse generation in higher education history

Contemporary undergraduates are at once more connected and more isolated than their predecessors

Current students are facing the worst economy in recent memory with unrealistic aspirations for the future

## **Generation on a Tightrope (Con't)**

In contrast to their predecessors, today's college students are more immature, dependent, coddled and entitled

Today's college students were born into and will live their lives in a nation enduring unrelenting and profound change at a speed and magnitude never before experienced

Current undergraduates grew up in a world dramatically different than their parents

The pace and scale of change will accelerate for the nation and its college students

## **The current generation of undergraduate college students are:**

Immature, needy, timid, protected, and tethered to their parents, who are their heroes

Self-absorbed, polite, rule observers, and good with adults

Hard hit by the recession

Pragmatic, career oriented, and determined to do well

Hard working, but confuse the quantity of work they do with the quality of the product

Weak in face to face and interpersonal skills

Consumer oriented and entitled

Optimistic about their personal futures

Pessimistic about the future of the country

Demanding of change

Disenchanted with politics and the nation's social institutions

Issue-oriented rather than ideological

Global talkers, green thinkers, and local actors



Engaged in service and wanting to do good

Little involved in campus life

Sexually active but interpersonally awkward

Abusers of alcohol and heavy users of psychological counseling services

Weak in basic skills and cultural knowledge

Lacking in decorum related to technology and understanding of academic rules and values

More comfortable with racial, ethnic, and gender differences

Desperately committed to the American Dream



# Personal Relationship



BFF Relationship



Friendly – Person/Student Centered

Augustine Helpful (with/for)

No Gap Cognitive and Affective

# Emotions of the Intellect

*Confessions X, 14*



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Joy

Desire

Sadness

Fear



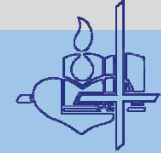
## **Instructing Beginners in the Faith**

*De Catechizandis Rudibus*

# **Story of Deogratius**

# Instructing Beginners in the Faith

*De Catechizandis Rudibus*



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## 3 “C”s for Person/Student Centered Learning

**Choose** appropriate Method

**EnCourage** Learners

**Caring** for Unmoved Hearers

# Instructing Beginners in the Faith

*De Catechizandis Rudibus*



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**Choose appropriate Method**

Prior Learning

Readiness

# Instructing Beginners in the Faith

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## EnCourage Learners (Parker Palmer)

Cheerful Attitude

Teaching as  
Service/Humility

Communication  
Style

Model Seeking/  
Learning

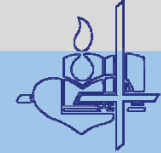
Classroom  
Climate

Harmony



# Instructing Beginners in the Faith

*De Catechizandis Rudibus*



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**Caring** for Unmoved Hearer

**Teaching the Unknowing – “When the least of mine learns, I learn”** (*Tractate on the Gospel of John 21, 7, 2*)

Tired

Discouraged

Bored

Sad

Apathetic

Tense/  
Fearful

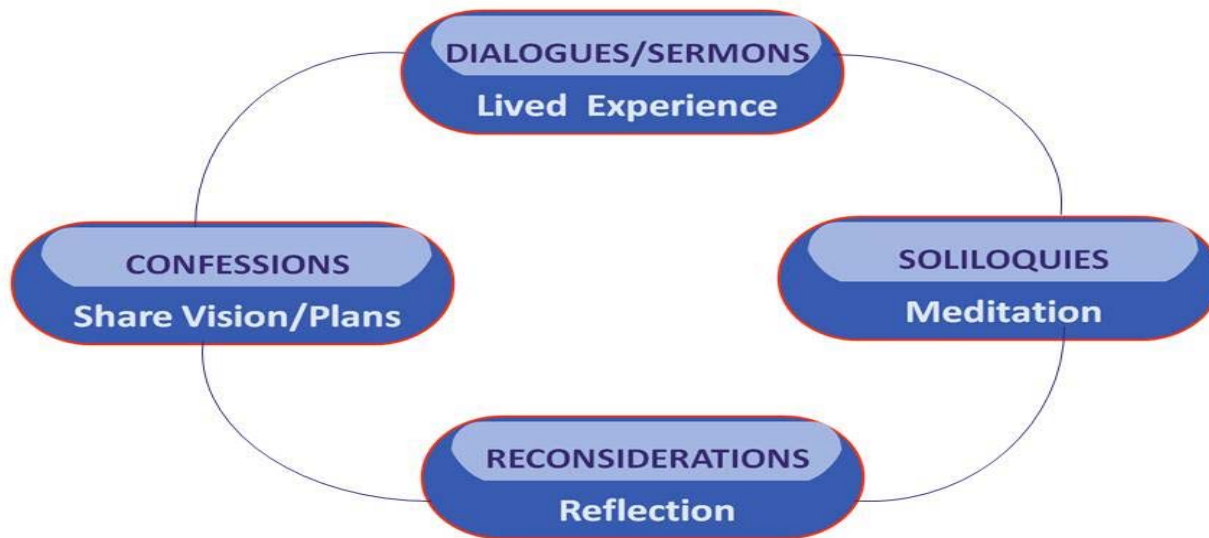


## **Instructing Beginners in the Faith**

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# **7 Augustinian Teaching Principles Exercise**

## Augustinian Reflection Circle



Youtube Videos:

Augustinian Transformation and Reflection I (8 Minutes) <https://youtu.be/RasikXYB94w>

Augustinian Transformation and Reflection I (8 Minutes) <https://youtu.be/PefRosuLwls>

Augustinian Reflection Circle Activity (9 minutes) <https://youtu.be/hWWXPIMBZVs>



## Contact Info

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## Thank You

**International Congress for Centers of  
Augustinian Education  
July 24-28, 2017  
Villanova University (USA)**

**Engagement through Augustinian Pedagogy  
Workshop**

**Pedagogy Activity**

**Step 1: Quickly review the 7 Augustinian Teaching Principles**

**Step 2: Choose 1 Principle you would like to share your experience in implementing or learn about**

**Step 3: Join small group for sharing/learning about that Principle**

**Step 4: Collate your small groups observations**

**Step 5: Report (in writing) what your group shared about experience and/or what the group would like to learn**

**TEACHING IN THE INSPIRATION OF ST. AUGUSTINE:  
 SEVEN AUGUSTINIAN PRINCIPLES**

Sixteen hundred years ago, a deacon wrote to his bishop to ask for instructions about how to teach the candidates who sought to become Christians. As with my own students, some of the candidates came with a sincere desire to learn, but others were there “to secure advantages in this world or avoid the troubles of life.”<sup>1</sup> The deacon wanted to know *what* to say, but the bishop (as was his custom) gave him more than he asked for. He told him what to say but also *how* to say it, giving him not just content but pedagogy. In fact, the bishop, St. Augustine of Hippo, turned his advice into a short book called *Instructing Beginners in Faith*. Augustine’s context was different from my own. He was speaking about candidates who would soon become his brothers and sisters in Christ; I teach in a contemporary American university with students of all different religious commitments. Despite the differences, his remarks have inspired me in a number of ways. Some of what he says lends confirmation to things I have learned from my own reading and experience; beyond that, his thinking -- especially his focus on the student-teacher relationship -- has helped me rethink my own pedagogy. Here are seven pedagogical principles with an Augustinian flavor, intended not as a final word but as a starting point for thinking and dialogue.

Suggested Principle	Practical implications	In St. Augustine’s words
<p><b>1. The teacher-learner relationship is vital.</b> As Augustine reminded us, a classroom is a dynamic system; the excitement and love of the teacher for the material and the teachers regard for the students themselves create a positive response from the students, which then further inspires the teacher. But if the students become bored and unresponsive, and if an adversarial climate develops, the teacher will become less effective and the students will learn less.</p>	<p>If we want to be effective teachers, we must create an environment where the students are excited about learning, not merely jumping through hoops to get the highest grade for the least work. This means giving high priority to creating a positive classroom dynamic so that students enjoy learning and “drink in the knowledge with pleasure.”<sup>2</sup> Their response is important, in other words, because it will bring out our best efforts.</p>	<p><i>We are given a much more appreciative hearing when we ourselves enjoy performing our task. Then the texture of our speech is suffused with the very delight that we take in speaking, and our words flow more easily and more pleasingly.</i><sup>3</sup></p> <p><i>When we see no reaction from our hearer, it is really tiring to continue speaking right to the end of the allotted time.</i><sup>4</sup></p>
<p><b>2. Creating a positive learning environment is even harder than getting the content right.</b> We are often so concerned with packing in content that we lose sight of the task of creating a positive classroom dynamic. But unless students are engaged by the process, they won’t really absorb the knowledge.</p>	<p>We need to reframe our thinking to ask not how much material we are covering, but how much the students actually learning. If the students are unmotivated and hostile, they may still absorb the facts, but in order for them to get to higher level thinking, they need to be positively engaged and excited by the educational experience of our class.</p>	<p><i>The difficult part of our task is not in giving rules about [covering the content]. No, our greatest concern is much more about how to make it possible for those who offer instruction to do so with joy. For the more they succeed in this, the more appealing they will be. But for cheerfulness to be present at the opportune time depends on the compassion of the teacher.</i><sup>5</sup></p>

<p><b>3. Know your students and customize the class for them.</b> Real learning is a function of the character, motivation, skills and limitations of the learner. As Ken Bain says in <i>What the Best Teachers Do</i>, “the best teachers try to find out as much as possible about their students.”</p>	<p>Some techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students about their background and interests.</li> <li>• Understand pressures of campus life.</li> <li>• Throughout the semester, give ungraded assessments to find out what students are learning.</li> <li>• Familiarize yourself with research on student development, learning styles, backgrounds.</li> </ul>	<p><i>In my own experience as a teacher, I am swayed now in one way, now in another, according as the characteristics and background of person that I see before me to receive instruction. And it is in keeping with these various influences that my actual address opens and moves forward and comes to a close.<sup>6</sup></i></p>
<p><b>4. Understand student fears, and help overcome them.</b> Many professors ask why their students are so quiet and shy in the classroom, although the students are noisy enough before and after class. Students are often quiet and shy because of fear and insecurity. We need to create a safe space for them to express themselves.</p>	<p>Students are often afraid to appear either stupid or as “teacher’s pets.” Some strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin discussions by asking questions that do not have a right answer (e.g., “What is an example of this?”) rather than asking students to provide the content for your class.</li> <li>• Give students time to think before they are asked to respond.</li> </ul>	<p><i>With gentle encouragement we should drive out the exaggerated fear that prevents the student from making known where he stands, and we should temper his shyness by instilling in him the value of our fraternal communion. By asking questions we should try to find out whether he understands what has been said, and we should give him confidence to voice freely any objection he thinks out to be raised.<sup>7</sup></i></p>
<p><b>5. Constantly reset the students’ attention.</b> Students often live chaotic lives, have poor time management skills, and don’t get enough sleep. Even good students lose attention, and good teachers look for ways to re-engage them, especially during lectures.</p>	<p>Some ways to reengage students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inject humor or anecdotes</li> <li>• Interject a period of small group discussion to break up a lecture</li> <li>• Ask students to do a brief ungraded writing assignment.</li> <li>• Have students stand up and stretch for a moment.</li> </ul>	<p><i>It often happens that someone who was listening in the beginning with pleasure later becomes tired and now he opens his mouth no longer to express approval but to yawn. We should reawaken his attention by making a remark spiced with seemly good humor and appropriate to the subject under discussion. Or we can relate something that arouses great awe and astonishment.<sup>8</sup></i></p>

<p><b>6. Connect learning to the student's own experience.</b> Students are often most engaged by things that touch on our own lives, we can use this focus to capture their interest.</p>	<p>Some techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illustrate material with practical, real world applications, especially from the students' own experience.</li> <li>• Use role plays, simulations, and active learning techniques.</li> </ul>	<p><i>What we say should touch preferably on the student's own situation so that, stung by solicitude for himself, he may become alert again.</i><sup>9</sup></p>
<p><b>7. Find the joy in making the old things new.</b> Most of us got into our field because we were fascinated by the deep puzzles and challenges of our discipline, but Augustine reminds us that as teachers we need to find joy in making our field more simple, rather than more complex, and watching students learn, even if we have done the same material many times over.</p>	<p>We need to take on a new task, every bit as challenging as what we face in our research: how to make students feel some of our excitement, even though they do not share our initial interest. If we can learn to find joy in this challenge, our work will be pleasant and rewarding. If we cannot engage with it, teaching intro classes will be a painful task, not very rewarding for either us or the students.</p>	<p><i>Although we may pay no attention to the beautiful sights of the city where we live, our own enjoyment is revived by sharing in the enjoyment that others derive from seeing them for the first time. And this we experience the more intensely, the closer our friendship is, for the more the bond of love allows us to be present in others, the more what has grown old becomes new again in our own eyes as well.</i><sup>10</sup></p>

Augustine's words provide some sound classroom advice (break up the lecture, make the material relevant, overcome student fears), but his thought also calls us to a deeper principle as well. Teacher and learner function in a dynamic relationship; when it works well, each side brings out the best in the other. Our task is to help the students help us be more effective teachers, so we can help them be more effective learners.

**Additional material and sources:**

For more ideas and readings on these topics, visit the author's website [www.teachphilosophy101.org](http://www.teachphilosophy101.org), especially the tabs on "Obstacles and Challenges," and "Lectures and Discussions." An essay, discussing this material in more detail is available in the tab on "Background Reading: Theory and Reflection."

Footnotes: <sup>1</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Instructing Beginners in Faith*, trans. Raymond Canning, ed. Boniface Ramsey (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2006), 5.9; <sup>2</sup>14.22; <sup>3</sup>2.18; <sup>4</sup>13.18; <sup>5</sup>2.4; <sup>6</sup>15.23; <sup>7</sup>13.18; <sup>8</sup>13.19; <sup>9</sup>13.19; <sup>10</sup>12.17. Some quotations have been shortened or slightly rewritten. I am grateful to Jonathan Yates for comments on earlier drafts.

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July 27, 2008



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**Engagement through Augustinian Pedagogy (McCloskey and Nielsen)  
Workshop Activity Group Discussion Reports**

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**Seven Augustinian Teaching Principles (J. Immerwahr)**

**1. The teacher-learner relationship is vital.**

- Unless you have engagement/relationship with students, nothing else will be effective (ex., Ask them how their weekend was)
- Feature of Augustinian School (visitors notice special about our schools → bond between teachers and students)
- Augustinian Values Institutes have shown that Augustinian schools have this in common, so it must be something within our charism
- Smaller class sizes help form relationships (benefit for many Augustinian schools)
- Take own children to sporting events
- Greeting students in hallway (“building bridges”)
- Group me and other social media networks can help meet them “where they are” on social media
- If school is only real constant and soft space, we have an enormous responsibility to them → but also an enormous opportunity for us to influence who these young people become
- Don’t make this more complicated that it needs to be → our presence (smiling) in the hall, at lunch, at games/events can be enough (could even shake hands with students)
- A vital and important relationship – but when the student feels excessively familiar with the teacher the wrong signals are sent
- The state and mood of students must be established each time we meet them
- Good relationship means that I care about the students and they will care about the subject because I care about it.
- The teacher journeys with the student
- #1 is fundamental to all the other items #2 through #7

**2. Creating a positive learning environment is even harder than getting the content right.**

- Academic content will be easier
- Set class so it is a flexible learning space where students choose where to sit and who to work with
- 1 School has a flexible approach, others are more rigid
- 1 School has subjects based in specific rooms
- Use of laptops digital issues --- how these affect the spaces and design
- The use of Interactive Whiteboards

**3. Know your students and customize the class for them.**

- Talk to and know families, background
- Students may know more about fellow students
- Range of subjects and abilities, so important in forming relationships
- Students need to feel that educator is interested in them

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- Family very important in primary education
- Outside classroom activities
- Some subjects lend themselves well
- How do they figure out where they are?
- How do we respond to generational differences?
- As teachers, we must constantly restrain ourselves
- Getting feedback on course as part of student assessment
- Difficult
  - To get to know individuals
  - Safe environment to make mistakes
- Varying types of interactions
- Need to set a balance
- Outside of classroom – get to know them

**4. Understand student fears, and help overcome them.**

- Need to identify the fears, or the person who is fearful
- Create a comforting environment
- Make a connection and demonstrate genuineness
- Fear of failure is biggest fear we encounter from students
- We try to show that we, as teachers, fail all the time
- Issues
  - Student: “I hate Math”
  - Wrong Answer
  - Adolescents are self-conscious/quiet
  - Students who don’t want to open up – want to be left alone – introvert or don’t want to be judged
  - Student with personal/family issues and experiences bring them to the classroom
- Strategies
  - Classroom as a place to make mistakes
  - There are no silly questions
  - Create positive tone in classroom
  - Steer students toward right answer
  - Get students to write
  - First (private), then share by reading (easier than thinking on feet at first)
  - Give students individual attention
  - Private encouragement of student/advance warning of expectation
- Student is quiet, withdrawn. There may be an issue at home – divorce/separation/custody battle
- When exams are coming up, meet with parents emphasizing importance of maintaining positive environment

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- There can be gender differences about sensitivity to issues at home
- Many students claim not to be good at math – Patience and individual approach can allow students to experience success, understanding and the realization of the possible

**5. Constantly reset the students' attention.**

- Problem of larger groups of students and longer time periods needing the teacher to change activities often
- Being in touch with your listeners/learners or you are an “empty boat moving in the river”
- Jokes and stories and songs
- Sometimes small groups are a waste of time
- Technology can be too routine
- Plan lesson that is broken down into 4 segments
  - Lecture
  - Visual (watch or touch)
  - Listen (feedback from students)
  - Work (tasks, worksheets or group work)
- Traditional methods are losing the attention of students. Different strategies are required. A reset is necessary. (This is based on experience and results)
- Change the task, if necessary, to retain the students' interest
- Students should be given time to rest/time out
- Provision of varied activities
- Be creative in providing learning activities
- Teacher should provide an element of surprise
- Need support of administration to innovate and be creative in providing a more engaging learning environment
- Lessons should be relevant and meaningful to the learner to help them become enthusiastic and excited about the lesson
- Provision of more collaborative activities
- Teacher should have a sense of humor

**6. Connect learning to the student's own experience.**

- The use of students' personal experiences in learning is very “Augustinian” because we make the students aware that what is happening in his family, community and society connects to learning
- The principle is not remote because learning is more relevant and personal
- The challenge in using the principle is how to provide various activities to make learning more interesting and involved
- The use of personal experiences should be made across the curriculum or subject matter

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**7. Find the joy in making the old things new.**

- Importance of word “joy.” St. Augustine found joy in life. Teacher needs to be happy.
- Content vs. culture – Old content is new if classroom culture is exciting and made joyful
- Augustine is old, but his ideas and experiences are often fresh and relevant
- Content becomes different in different settings (gender differences and school setting)
- Not easy to change courses each year to engage and keep relevant, e.g., adding film to courses
- A means to try to reach all students
- What a student brings to class changes how a lesson goes
- Take learning outside the classroom walls
- Use Whiteboards for students to record answers – using their iPad or iPhone. Each student photographs everyone’s answers. This facilitates discussions. Each student can see all other students’ work.
- Key indicator of intelligent teachers
  - Ability to simplify material
  - Ability to simplify concepts
  - Ability to break down lessons
- Make the discovery of this a communal search creating an opportunity for student-teacher relationship
- Create student-teacher dialogues about this