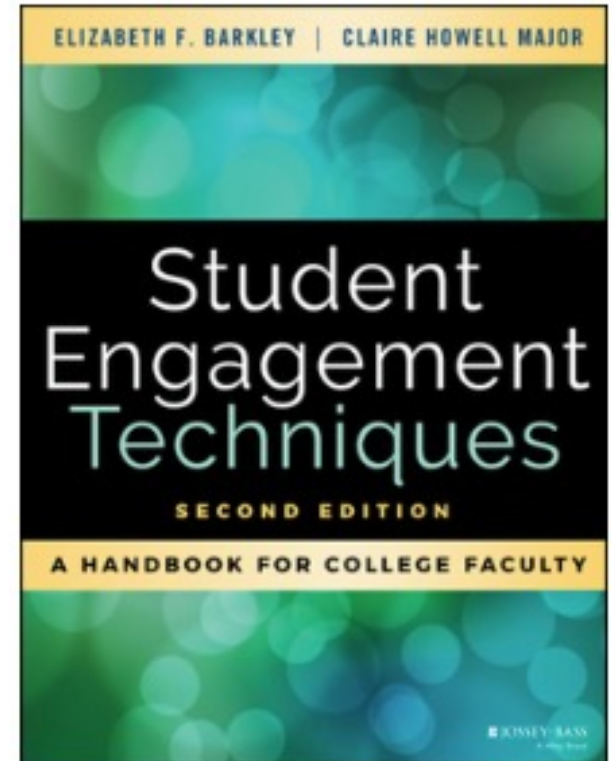# Connections + Agency = Engagement

My goal was to create quick and effective tools and activities centered around student agency *and* connections, that would further opportunities for student engagement.

My sources of inspiration and evidence-based ideas come from the wonderful SET Fellowship reading list and others cited on slides.

# WHY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS?

One of the earliest pairings of the term **engagement with learning, at least at the college level**, occurs in Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991) treatise...

*"Simply put, the greater the student's involvement or engagement in academic work or in the academic experience of college, the greater his or her level of knowledge acquisition and general cognitive development." (p. 848)*

ELIZABETH F. BARKLEY | CLAIRE HOWELL MAJOR

## Student Engagement Techniques

### SECOND EDITION

A HANDBOOK FOR COLLEGE FACULTY

# CONNECTIONS ?        AGENCY ?

"Students will engage more in classroom-based learning if they feel that they are welcomed, valuable, contributing members of a learning community."

Elizabeth F. Barkley and Claire H. Major, *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty,* Jossey-Bass, 2020.

Gonzalez, Norma, et al., editors. *Funds of Knowledge*. Routledge Member of the Taylor and Francis Group, 2005.

"Learning is actively constructed - rather than passively received - by learners through an experiential process of building upon prior knowledge and experiences."

Harlow, S., Cummings, R., & Aberasturi, S. M. (2007). Karl Popper and Jean Piaget: A Rationale for Constructivism. *The Educational Forum*, 71(1), 41–48. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131720608984566

# TODAY'S PRESENTATION –

Offering *simple* targeted tools to create connections and student agency, using multimodal activities and culturally responsive pedagogy

Applicable to any discipline

Tools that respect curricular time constraints

Adaptable to multiple course formats

Able to enhance content objectives

CONNECTIONS –
'This prof knows
who I am'

AGENCY – 'My
needs matters'

METACOGNITION
– 'How do I learn
best?'

# DAY 2 STUDENT INFO SHEET

NAME: _____ Pronouns: _____ Year at MC :_____

1. What are your interests, abilities, and preferences ?

2. Why are you taking this course ?

3. If any, what major are you considering ?

4. Spring 2026 courses :

5. Are there any important life circumstances that you'd like to share that could relate to your learning? *(jobs, family responsibilities, commuting issues, tech issues....)*

6. What Learning style serves you best, and how do you approach studying?

7. What's the best way to communicate with you? *(text, MC email?)*

# Semester at a Glance
(organizational skills)

## "I got this!"

### Programme 101 à coup d'œil

| Devoirs | | EXAMENS: | Présentations: |
|---------|---|----------|----------------|
| Unité 1 | le 22 septembre | | Sujet/Titre le 30 septembre |
| Unité 2 | le 6 octobre | | |
| Unité 3 | le 20 octobre | Unités 1, 2, 3 le ~~23~~ 28 octobre | |
| | | | Bibliographie le 30 octobre |
| Unité 4 | le 3 novembre | | Présentations le 11 novembre |
| Unité 5 | le 17 novembre | Unités 4 + 5 le 20 novembre | |
| Unité 6 | le 28 novembre | | |
| Unité 7 | le 1er décembre | Unités 6 + 7 le 4 décembre | |
| | | Examen oral le 13 décembre | |
| | | Examen final le 18 décembre (8:00AM !) | |

# Thinking together

$1 + 1 + 1 = ....\infty$ (research, collaboration skills)

1. Consider possible topics for your presentations in groups

2. Share ideas with each other to help expand topics in different directions.  Include suggestions for possible AI prompts that could yield useful and perhaps unexpected information.

3. As ideas are offered about your own topic, make note of the ones that you find interesting.

4. Be sure to thank each other for the brainstorming!

*One of my overall goals has been to help create lifelong learning, critical-thinking, and educated citizens. I want to enable students to discuss, evaluate, and discern…*
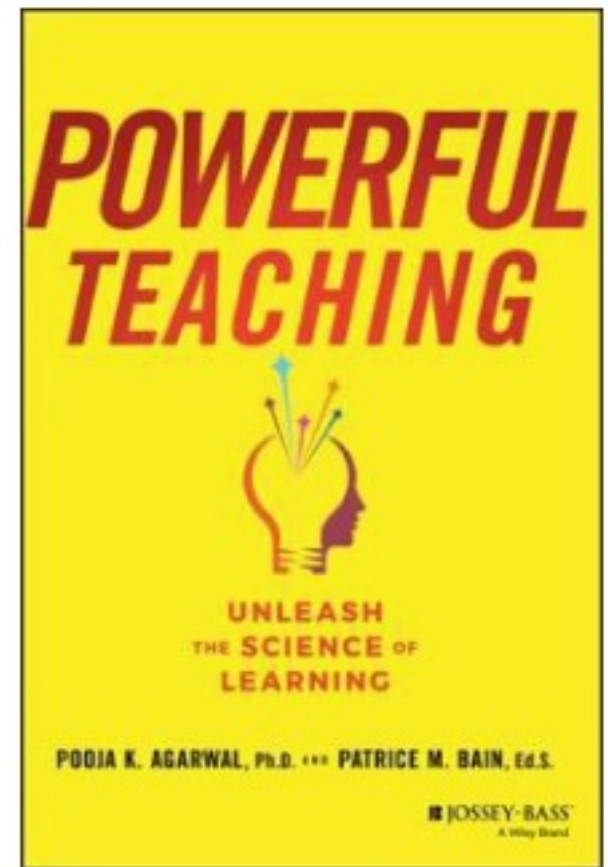
*"Transfer (of learning) happens when students take something familiar and apply it to something unfamiliar"*

## Retrieval practice…

*'Use it or lose it!'*

*"When students are aware of what they know and don't know, learning is more successful…"*

*'I don't know that yet!'*

**POWERFUL TEACHING**

UNLEASH THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING

POOJA K. AGARWAL, Ph.D. and PATRICE M. BAIN, Ed.S.

JOSSEY-BASS
A Wiley Brand

# Paired, shared, and compared interpretations of photo scenarios
## (speaking skills, great minds, + fun)

- What are they thinking?



- What are they going to do next?



- What have they succeeded in doing?

# Mid-semester Student Feedback
## Anonymous survey of course activities

Please rate the activities according to each category.

1 = Little to none        2 = Somewhat        3 = Quite a lot

- ❖ Enjoyment/Interest level
- ❖ Helpful level (Adds to your understanding/success)
- ❖ Memorable level (Most likely to remember)

| | Enjoyment/Interest | Helpful | Memorable |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Student Conversations/Dialogs | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • Grammar explanations | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • VHL practice exercises | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • Practice quizzes and writing | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • Readings from text during class | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • Cultural information | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • Music | ____ | ____ | ____ |
| • Games | ____ | ____ | ____ |

# SHARED ADMIRATION... (writing skills)
## What or who in the world...do you admire?

Choose what or who you admire... identify this person, place, or business as if it were you.

Write a quick blurb following the example and share who/what/where...

Then share why you chose this, why this is admirable.

*Example:* ★★★
1. My name is: _____. I am a person / a business / a place.
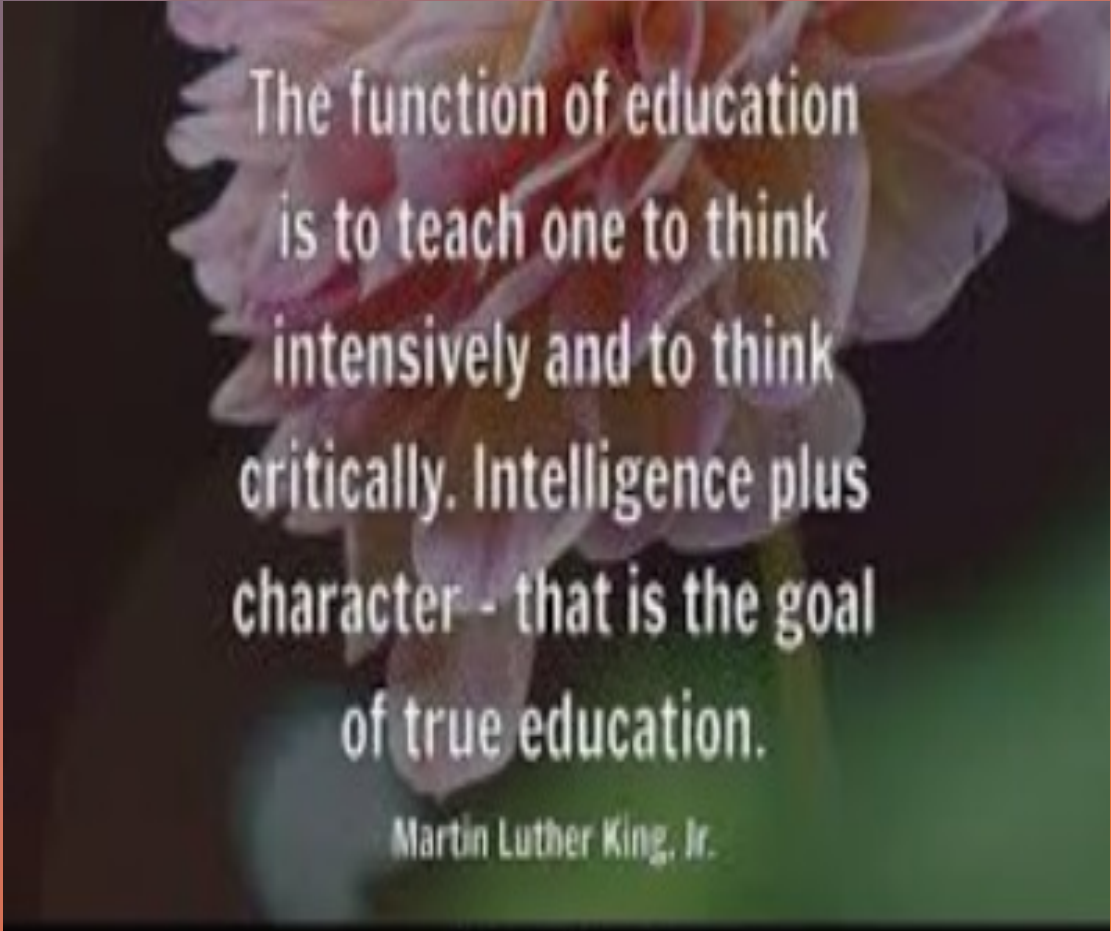2. This is what I do: _____.
3. I am admirable because: _____.

*Worthy goals for our students-...*
*Engagement with others,*
*with the world,*
*recognition of the*
*importance of their voice*
*in shaping the world...*

Please feel free
to contact me to
brainstorm ideas
within your
discipline.

vtanner@montgomerycollege.edu

Merci beaucoup!

The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.

- Martin Luther King, Jr.