6 Degrees of Academic Success

Directions: Please select items from the list below the connection options and place those items next to the connection you think makes the best fit.

Closest (1st) connection:

Next closest (2nd) connection:

3rd closest connection:

4th closest connection:

5th closest connection:

6th closest connection:

Me!

Connections:

- Showing up for class, face-to-face or online, as scheduled, ready to pay attention and participate!
- Completing and turning in ALL the required work on time!
- Being ready to demonstrate that I’ve learned the course material by putting in the time to study, review, and practice course content and skills!
- Student with an A grade! Demonstrating that I know the course material by proving my understanding and skills on the final project or exam!
- Understanding the instructor’s directions and knowing WHEN and WHERE to submit assignments!
- Having a study partner or study group to help me learn the course material by sharing time and talents to study, review, and practice course content and skills as well as to get my work submitted correctly and on time!
6 Degrees of Academic Success

Closest (1st) connection: Student with an A grade! Demonstrating that I know the course material by proving my understanding and skills on the final project or exam!

Next closest (2nd) connection: Being ready to demonstrate that I've learned the course material by putting in the time to study, review, and practice course content and skills!

3rd closest connection: Having a study partner or study group to help me learn the course material by sharing time and talents to study, review, and practice course content and skills as well as to get my work submitted correctly and on time!

4th closest connection: Completing and turning in ALL the required work on time!

5th closest connection: Understanding the instructor's directions and knowing WHEN and WHERE to submit assignments!

6th closest connection: Showing up for class, face-to-face or online, as scheduled, ready to pay attention and participate!

Me Right Now!

6 Degrees of Teaching Success

Closest (1st) connection: Students exceed performance expectations, turn work in on time, participate in student evaluations, and provide positive and helpful evaluation feedback.

Next closest (2nd) connection:

3rd closest connection:

4th closest connection:

5th closest connection:

6th closest connection:

Me Right Now!
Student Motivation Strategies for the First Week of Classes

**Learning Principle:** Students’ motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn. (from Ambrose, et al, *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching, 2010*)

**Motivation Strategies:**

**Advice Letter (20 minutes):** Ask students to look at the syllabus and then write a short advice letter to themselves from their future selves at the end of the course. Ask students to include at least three pieces of specific, practical advice for succeeding in the course that their future selves would like them to begin following now. Allow five minutes for syllabus review, annotation, and brainstorming; five minutes for writing; and five minutes to share letters with a peer. Add a five minute debrief to list advice on the physical or online whiteboard.

**Concept Map (15 minutes):** Ask students to draw a concept map, using an image or description of themselves as successful students as the center concept and linking images and descriptions of their particular successes and successful behaviors to that center concept of themselves. Allow five minutes for drawing and five minutes for sharing maps with peers. Do a quick five minute debrief for insights and shared discoveries.

**Defining Features Matrix (15 minutes):** Provide a table or chart for students that provides terms connected with academic success (e.g., time management, study group, practice, ask the instructor) and ask students to fill in the blank areas that correspond to these terms with examples of how they already do these activities OR how they envision themselves doing these activities successfully. Do a quick five minute debrief for insights and shared discoveries.

**One Minute Paper (10 minutes):** Ask students to write for 1-3 minutes in response to focused questions on their own senses of capacity (e.g., “What has been the hardest thing you’ve had to learn? How did you do it?”; “What do you know how to do well? How have you learned your expertise in this area?”). Follow this activity with a five minute Think-Pair-Share or small group sharing exercise.

**Self-Confidence Survey (15 minutes):** Design a brief survey that asks students to rate their self-confidence in their academic success generally and then more specifically for the course. Include open-ended questions to create opportunities for students to describe times when they felt most confident about their learning. Do a quick five minute debrief for insights and shared discoveries.

**6 Degrees of Success (15 minutes):** Ask students to identify the six degrees of academic behavior that connect them in the present with their academic success at the end of the course. Provide a handout that includes six blank steps for students to fill in; if time is short, add in the six steps you think are most useful at the bottom in scrambled order and ask students to match those to the steps. Think of this as a backward planning exercise. Do a quick five minute debrief for insights and shared discoveries.

**Think-Pair-Share (10 minutes):** Assign partners; ask students to read or reflect individually on their memories of academic success and then to share their thoughts with a partner.