

# TECH TO TEACHING ASSIGNMENT F2.1

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your mastery of the following Tech to Teaching learning outcome:

F2.1 Describe strategies for motivating students with different backgrounds and goals

## ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Apply your understanding of student motivation to one of the two case studies found on page 2 of this document, providing a written response with the following three parts (maximum 1000 words total):

- Summarize the problem(s) that appear to be present in the case.
- Make a recommendation for how the instructor should anticipate or respond to the challenges described.
- Use principles/theories of motivation to explain why your recommended solution should create the desired effect.

## SUBMISSION DETAILS

Please submit this assignment through the Tech to Teaching Canvas site by Friday, February 8<sup>th</sup>.

If you do not yet have access to the Tech to Teaching Canvas site, this means you still need to complete the Tech to Teaching interest form, and schedule an intake appointment with a member of the TA and Future Faculty team.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to the content covered in class, the following two books are excellent resources on this topic (and are available for free online):

- *How Learning Works* by Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett, DiPietro, & Norman
- *How People Learn* edited by Bransford, Brown & Cocking

## CASE STUDIES (SELECT ONE)

### **Case study 1: My students are going to love this – NOT**

This past semester, I finally got to teach a course that relates directly to my research area. I put in a lot of time and energy this summer preparing materials and was really excited going into the semester. I used a number of seminal readings in the field and assigned a research project based on key challenges that face us today. I thought that students would be excited by the topic and would appreciate engaging with the research, but it did not turn out the way I had hoped. I was really disappointed by their work. With the exception of the two advanced PhD students and the one postdoc who was sitting in, they were not at all interested in the readings and hardly participated in the discussions. In addition, they were not particularly inspired or creative in choosing research topics. Overall, they made little progress across the semester. I guess when it comes right down to it, most students do not much care about my research area. (adapted from Ambrose, *et al*, 2010, p. 66)

### **Case study 2: A third of you will not pass this course**

My colleague who usually teaches Thermodynamics was on leave for the semester, and I was assigned to take his place. I knew it would not be easy to teach this course: it has a reputation for being really hard, and engineering students only take it because it is required for the major. On top of that, my colleague had warned me that many students stop coming to lecture early on in the semester, and those who come to class often do not come prepared. It seemed clear that I needed a way to motivate students to work hard and keep up with the material. I recalled that when I was a student, any suggestion by the professor that I might not be up to the challenge really got me fired up and eager to prove him wrong. So I told my students on the first day of class, "This is a very difficult course. You will need to work harder than you have ever worked in a course and still a third of you will not pass." I expected that if my students hear that, they would dig in and work harder to measure up. But to my surprise, they slacked off even more than in previous semesters: they often did not come to class, they made lackluster efforts at the homework, and their test performance was the worst it had been for many semesters. And this was after I gave them fair warning! This class had the worst attitude I have ever seen and the students seemed to be consumed by an overall sense of lethargy and apathy. I am beginning to think that today's students are just plain lazy. (Ambrose, *et al*, 2010, p. 67)