Fostering student decision making and community in a large group discussion

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Project IMPRESS

Integrating Metacognitive Practices and Research to Ensure Student Success

1. Pre-enrollment Summer Program
2. First-year Foundations Courses
3. Second-year Learning Assistant Program
Under Represented Minorities (URMs) don’t persist in STEM

Need for better community and support (feeling like you don’t fit in)

Need for better metacognitive skills and accurate self-assessment

Why?

Most transition programs focus on content knowledge and study habits
Summer Program Goals

- Develop metacognitive skills through active and reflective metacognitive activities
- Iterative refinement of student models through experimentation
- Create a community of holistic student support
What would community look like in a large discussion?

- Listening to each other
- Valuing other’s contributions
- Asking each other questions
- Proposing one’s own ideas
- Valuing SELF as contributor
- Answering other’s questions
How to Foster Community

Example of from Day 1

Instructor behavior

Student Response

Task: Create a sign for “metacognition”

Episode was chosen to be a good example, but is consistent with interactions throughout program
What does the instructor do?

- Explicitly refers to students as “experts”
- Models behavior that values student views
- Deflects questions back to the group
- Removes himself from the conversation
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Call students “experts”

- Instructor introduces the task:

  “…We are going to work with our **experts** to try to come up with a sign that we can use for metacognition and we’re going to try to use that sign for the rest of the IMPRESS program.”
What does the instructor do?

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• Models behavior that values student views

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- **Deflects questions back to the group**
- Removes himself from the conversation
Deflects questions to group

Jonah asks interpreter how to sign “think”

Ale tries to respond, but Jonah is looking at interpreter.

Instructor tells Jonah to “ask our experts” directing him to Ale.

Jonah asks Ale directly and she responds.

Several other students chime in and the conversation takes off.
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• Models behavior that values student views

• Deflects questions back to the group

• Removes himself from the conversation
Does it work?

- Jonah’s progression through the episode

  Asks Interpreter questions about signing

  Asks other students questions about signs

  Proposes his own ideas for the “metacognition” sign

  Answers other students questions about signs

Students decide on the sign!
Fostering Community

- Highlight student expertise
- Model behavior that values student ideas
- Deflect questions to peer groups
- Remove ourselves from the conversation!
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