

Fall 2018's General meeting: Index cards analysis

The Fall 2018's General Meeting took place on August 14, 2018 at the Honolulu Community College (HonCC). Approximately 250 staff and faculty members attended. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Karen Lee, introduced the 2018-2019 academic year as the “year of purposeful engagement.” She asked the audience to share some current practices and future plans on how to fulfill this vision.

Attendees answered two questions: “what are you already doing to engage students and promote student success?” on blue index cards and “what will you commit to doing this year that can engage students and promote persistence?” on pink index cards. Participants submitted 145 blue cards and 134 pink cards. They noted a variety of insights on each card, for a total of 233 practices on blue cards and 176 plans on pink cards.

I analyzed the data using Grounded Theory methodology. I coded each index card via NVIVO software and framed the codes within the Universal Design for Learning model (<http://www.cast.org/our-work/about-udl.html>), which is suitable for a diverse campus as HonCC. The practices and plans for engagement overlapped, with regards to both numerical and textual analysis. Therefore, I'll present the current practices for engagement and note the future plans that add to them. Because the index card questions were about engagement, the results tend to cluster on the third UDL principle, “provide multiple means of engagement.” Yet, some meaningful insights emerged also across the first two principles.

Table 1: Synopsis of results

I. Provide multiple means of REPRESENTATION		II. Provide multiple means of ACTION/EXPRESSION		III. Provide multiple means of ENGAGEMENT	
Practices	Plans	Practices	Plans	Practices	Plans
4.29%	2.84%	29.18%	36.36%	66.52%	60.80%
(10)	(5)	(68)	(64)	(155)	(107)

Principle I. Provide multiple means of representation

Faculty and staff members clarify vocabulary, promote understanding across languages, and illustrate information through a variety of media. For instance, they “engage with students’ cultures and use students’ languages if possible” (UDL guideline 2, mentioned 0.86% of the time).

They also activate background knowledge, highlight patterns, and maximize transfer of knowledge. For example, they relate class content to global perspectives, local context, everyday life, and students’ stories “to show students that what they are learning is practical and important” (UDL guideline 3, mentioned 3.43% of the time).

In addition to continuing these effective practices, they plan to:

Chiara Logli, Ph.D., Institutional Assessment Specialist
 Institutional Assessment Office ~ Honolulu Community College ~ 874 Dillingham Blvd. ~ Honolulu, HI 96817
 Phone: (808) 844-2317 ~ E-mail: logli@hawaii.edu ~ Webpage: <https://www.honolulu.hawaii.edu/assessment>

- Offer new trainings;
- Participate in more workshops;
- Share what they learned in professional development, such as in Ho‘āla Hou to help students make connections between cultures.”

Principle II. Provide multiple means of action and expression

Faculty and staff members vary the methods for response and optimize access to technologies, including via emails, SMS, phone calls, special phone-office hours for distance education (DE) students, videos of all lectures and lab work, extra credit for early Laulima communication, Google apps (e.g., sheets, slides, sites, groups), online discussions, and other virtual platforms to support student collaboration (UDL guideline 4, mentioned 6.44% of the time).

They also provide options for expressions, such as through class discussions, student debates, interactions during lab, in-depth engaging questions, hands-on activities, experimental learning, practical experiences, community service, industry networking, and service learning projects in order to “guide students to see the beauty in the subject.” As a faculty member wrote, the intention is to “create space for students to become part of the program in significant ways” (UDL guideline 5, mentioned 6.87% of the time).

In addition, they guide appropriate goal-setting by sending various types of e-newsletters and handouts to students before sessions with contact and course information. They support planning and strategy development by assisting students to find spaces and resources (e.g., classrooms, labs, writing center, testing center, Hawaiian center, veteran center, library, academic counseling, TRIO, CARE, career services, tutoring, Transition Coordinator, peer mentors, non-credit ESL classroom in PCATT, graduation pathways, financial aid, campus tour, orientation, student worker training, student access, student success center, academic support). For instance, they mention to “give kudos on Mysuccess” and “contact those who receive academic alert via MySuccess to hopefully find them resources that can help them overcome their challenge.” They enhance capacity for monitoring progress by “keeping students accurately updated on content course grades” and “inspecting every project that a student creates—if there is a deficiency, it is addressed and corrected before moving on to the next project” (UDL guideline 6, mentioned 15.88% of the time).

With regards to plans for the future, they will build upon the current practices and:

- Maximize usage of technology (e.g., providing webpage with instructor’s bio, emailing DE students, increasing discussion forum to solidify teacher presence, using Laulima for content material, handouts, quizzes, homework submission);
- Expand course material that students will not get on other campuses (e.g., sustainability focus);
- Develop authentic assessments that are reflective of student learning outcomes, rather than unrelated goals (e.g., writing skills);
- Scaffold learning;
- Increase resources, become more knowledgeable about resources, refer students to resources, and follow through with students who use resources;

- Use MySuccess to check-in with students who are underperforming, to provide early and timely feedbacks so they know how they are doing, to engage students through survey and other available resources;
- Schedule CARE presentations/workshops in class;
- Require students to visit a counselor and go to the Writing Center—10% of grade;
- Make an assignment where they have to plot an outline of courses to reach their end goal;
- Require one office visit per student per semester;
- Hold more Saturday office hours, where students can bring kids;
- Return graded work by the next class meeting and regularly email progress reports;
- Promote HCC programs and courses to increase enrollment;
- Capitalize on the growing Early College Credits trend;
- Bringing more of HonCC's opportunities to high school students.

Principle III. Provide multiple means of engagement

Faculty and staff members optimize individual choice and autonomy, for instance by allowing them to create the ground rules for class, creating options for them at every step, and putting them in charge of opening and closing lab classrooms. They minimize distractions, for instance by creating a safe space, non-pressure learning atmosphere, and a friendly environment “so that students feel comfortable enough to interact with each other and help each other learn better” (UDL guideline 7, mentioned 5.15% of the time).

They heighten salience of goals, including by framing lessons within current news, highlighting ethical considerations around social media, engaging students in real world activities (e.g., excursions, workshops, fieldtrips, site visits, outside-of-classroom projects, professional development opportunities, guest speakers), and making assignments relevant to students' lives. They vary demands and resources to optimize challenge—“I diversify my teaching strategies, I switch mode every 10 minutes to support each learning preference.” They foster collaboration and community, by encouraging students to participate in campus life (e.g., joining RISO, PTK, department clubs, social activities, leadership opportunities) and integrating small group projects, ice breaker activities, and get-together so students can get to know one another, solve challenging problems, create a sense of community, and take responsibility as a team member. A faculty member arranges “talk story hikes” and field trips with DE students to get to know each other. They also increase mastery-oriented feedback by integrating “feedback every few minutes,” “overseeing students to ensure they understand the subject, using question and answer process,” and encouraging peer mentorships and learning communities where students “share their mistakes, discoveries and learn from each other” (UDL guideline 8, 21.03% of the time).

They promote expectations and optimize motivation by having an open door policy, calling students by name, acknowledging student on the mall, engaging the family when appropriate, always checking if they need help, assisting them to solve issues instead of passing them along, taking the time to understand their needs, responding in a timely manner even when not on duty, having lots of one-on-one interactions, pointing out their strengths, pushing them to do better, sharing weekly inspirational quotes, and giving them several attempts, and keeping contact after graduation. A faculty member mentions that “in DE courses, we still have face-to-face meeting

to discuss life issues on demand by the student.” They facilitate personal coping skills by finding out their passions, dreams, strengths, areas of growth as well as providing mentoring, advising, coaching, and guidance with students one-to-one in their process towards their goals. Participants mention that they provide letters and recommendation, live networking, application revisions, mock interviews, joint training and testing with local organizations. They develop self-assessment and reflection, through regular office hours, one-minute survey (e.g., What did you learn today? What did you have more questions about?), end of semester meetings, and student evaluations where they ask for student feedback and act upon it (UDL guideline 9, mentioned 40.34% of the time).

In addition to continue all these successful practices, faculty and staff members will:

- Give students more meaningful responsibilities, including voting on curriculum and creating rubrics;
- Move the tables to form squares to promote students’ engagement with each other rather than sitting in a straight line;
- Add activities to help students identify with place, culture, greater community;
- Find a more convenient place to hold office hours than campus office;
- Be more proactive to engage students before semester starts;
- Connect with DE students more often;
- Consistently make an effort to learn students’ stories;
- Show up early to class;
- Add response chart in lobby for students to communicate with us;
- Create talk story/snack time;
- Conduct “I wish my teacher knew” exercise at the start, mid, and end to compare the knowledge;
- Use positive language so students think positively;
- Get the whole cohort together in auditorium and talk about their classes, their needs, how we HonCC can assist them better;
- Mentor a new student;
- Provide more class time for discussions about school- and career-related concerns
- Support the study abroad students during that transition;
- Weekly “my story” facts; give students insight/inspiration based on my path;
- Introduce environmental awareness and offer sustainable community-based extra credit activities (e.g., Lo’i Kalo Park, Malama Aina Days);
- Be involved with student groups, as an advisor, advocate, announcer of student activities;
- Share students’ engagement strategies with other faculty members and lecturers;
- Create communities of practice;
- Increase personal touch on campus by emailing less and calling/interacting more.

