UNDERSTANDING YEAR 9 STUDENTS FORUM

TUESDAY, 18 MARCH 2008
Engaging and motivating Year 9 students

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Presentation overview

- What do we know about Year 9 students?
- What do we know about Year 9 & schooling?
- Table Activity
- 10 suggestions for motivating and engaging Year 9 students
What do we know about Year 9 students?

• Year 9 students are well into adolescence
• They are gaining independence from their parents and teachers whilst developing more supportive relationships with their peers
• They are a very diverse group as their developmental changes are not experienced consistently, nor are they managed equally well
What do we know about Year 9 and schooling?

Between Years 5-9 student:
- Literacy and numeracy skills tend to plateau
- Attitudes to school and engagement in learning decline
- Views of the quality of teacher-student relationships decline
- Satisfaction with learning and school work declines
In summary

Year 9 students engage in learning when they:

• Feel they can meet the academic challenges
• See value and purpose in the activities
• Feel respected, cared for and safe
Table Activity 1: Year 9 Program Audit

- Audit your school’s Year 9 program against the 30 descriptors in the Year 9 Program Audit handout
- Discuss your responses
Table Activity 2: Ranking Year 9 Program Items

- Select your ‘top 5’ items from the 30 characteristics of a highly effective Year 9 Program
- Discuss your responses in groups of 3 or 4
- Consolidate your ‘top 5’
10 Suggestions for Engaging and Motivating Year 9 Students

1. Provide structures and procedures that deliver timetable flexibility and enable a strong bond to be developed between and within the staff and student group.

2. Provide classroom organisation and teaching and learning practices that are responsive to the diverse learning, social and emotional needs of young adolescents.
10 Suggestions for Engaging andMotivating Year 9 Students

3. Provide a distinct physical environment dedicated to Year 9
4. Provide opportunities for intensive off-campus, community-based learning experiences
5. Provide a curriculum program structure that facilitates deep engagement with learning
10 Suggestions for Engaging and Motivating Year 9 Students

6. Provide learning opportunities that support students to engage with real problems that require complex solutions

7. Provide opportunities for students to experience adult-like roles and responsibilities
10 Suggestions for Engaging and Motivating Year 9 Students

8. Provide opportunities for students to participate in special events or programs that are of substantial interest and/or challenge to them

9. Provide opportunities for students to celebrate and be recognised for their contributions, efforts and achievements
10 Suggestions for Engaging and Motivating Year 9 Students

10. Provide opportunities for students to develop a special relationship with an adult from within or beyond the school community
Final Take-away Message

As Year 9 students are in a ‘developmental transition’, their schooling should be:

• Unique and developmentally appropriate, not just a little more difficult than that in previous years of school or a little less difficult than that in the following years

• An experience that students are looking forward to and one that they look back on as being something very special
Table Activity 3: Reflection

To make Year 9 more engaging for students what improvements could you make to:

- School organisation
- Curriculum design
- Classroom practices
- Community linkages
- Special events
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