Teaching Activity

Communicating high expectations of learning in a diverse classroom

High expectations can work wonders for student achievement.

Below are some examples on how to communicate high expectations of learning for all in a diverse classroom:

- Explicitly communicate goals for learning in the class, and show how assignments and projects are designed to help students achieve those goals. This can help illustrate that success is based on ability and effort, not on identity or life experience.

- Show models of successful assignments and projects. The web can be a powerful tool for modeling student work. Have students create assignments and post them on blogs, etc. Comment with your positive feedback for the whole class to see.

- Acknowledge that students may see material as challenging. Avoid comments that minimize challenges (for example, "It’s easy to see...") that can give the impression that something is wrong with students who find the material difficult. Such students may get the impression that requests for help or clarification are not welcome.

- Check in with your students to find out what they feel they are learning and what might help them learn more effectively. For example, ask students to write briefly, at the end of a class period, one thing they learned and one thing they are still confused about from that day.