

Operationalizing engagement: towards a systematic review of the student experience



Based on extensive literature on student engagement* and the role of engagement and motivation in affecting a range of attitudes and behaviors related to learning, we created a simple tool to assess the impact various parts of a program may have on engagement. The tool can be applied to entire programs or specific elements such as courses or advising practices. At Maastricht University we currently use this model to assess the impact of the first year experience on student retention.

*see for a helpful overview Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C., & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of educational research*, 74(1), 59-109.

- 1 • Recruitment
- 2 • Application
- 3 • Matching - Selection
- 4 • Admission
- 5 • Introduction
- 6 • First Year

First Year	Faculty / Program Introduction	Curriculum – content of course(s)	Curriculum – assessment in courses	Student-staff relations	Advising and/or mentoring	Housing issues	Etcetera...
Affective	Social integration; opening the black box	Within the ‘zone of proximity’?	Intimidating or reassuring?	Creates a sense of mutual commitment?	Helps to settle in, deal with transition?	Uncertainties, unsettling, homesickness	
Behavioral	Knowing the way, what to do	Activating or passive?	Transparent or vague?	Makes it easy to seek advice, feedback	Helps translate goals into action?	Distraction from studies, no place to study	
Cognitive	Inspiration, confirmation of choice, raising curiosity	Challenging, inspiring or mind-numbing?	Formative or summative?	Stimulates by setting examples, act as role-model	Stimulates to set goals for learning and participating?	No time and place for exploring interests	

