

# SENSE OF PURPOSE

WHAT GIVES STUDENTS MEANING?



GROWTHMINDS



## Did you know?

**Purpose** is a consistent and generalized drive to do something that is both **meaningful to the self** and **significant to the outside world** (Damon et al., 2003). Students with a **strong sense of purpose** are **more engaged in academic activities**, have more **efficient study habits**, and **achieve greater academic success** (Xerri et al., 2018).



## Ask yourself this...

1. Are you aiming to provide students with an education that will give them with a sense of life's meaning?
2. Do you incorporate the real world into your learning (examples of good practice, important people, companies, etc.)?



## What can you actually do in the classroom?

- **The first step is you.** You need to find and become aware of your purpose and passion at work. Why? Because it will also affect students. Know exactly what motivates you, analyse your personal goals and strive to achieve them. Discover ways you can improve your learning processes and consequently help make your university better.
- **Promote curiosity.** Focus on developing curiosity in your classrooms to assist students discover what they are interested in and what inspires them. You achieve this by exposing students to a wide range of topics, high expectations, appropriate growth mindset language and positive classroom climate.
- **Be mentor and model.** Have high expectations of your students, but still offer them support. Support should be in the form of mentoring, where you lead them to a solution, and at the same time include your life experiences from which they will be able to extract a sense of purpose. Mentoring is more informal and relational in nature than teaching.



## References

1. Damon, W., Menon, J., & Cotton Bronk, K. (2003). The development of purpose during adolescence. *Applied developmental science*, 7(3), 119-128. DOI: 10.1207/S1532480XADS0703\_2
2. Xerri, M. J., Radford, K., & Shacklock, K. (2018). Student engagement in academic activities: A social support perspective. *Higher education*, 75(4), 589-605. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-017-0162-9



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## What can you actually do in the classroom?

- **Connect to the real world.** Remind them that education is closer to the reality of their lives than they might think. To bridge the gap between the classroom and real life, get students interested in real-world issues and teach them about inspiring individuals. If possible, present the real world to students as often as possible, especially in programs where there is not much practice during the years of studying. You can take them to companies, institutions etc., so they can see real-life problems and their dynamic of solving problems.
- **Give students voice and choice.** Students gain a sense of importance and meaning from their capacity to push boundaries and make changes. Allow them to do this by emphasizing the importance of their feedbacks on the learning process, moreover, you can choose a dedicated hour for individual or group conversations about the changes. Support students to join and participate in the student committee because it allows them to see how powerful they are in making a difference for the causes they care about.
- **Learn about inspirational people.** In learning process include talking about important historical personalities who have accomplished a lot, as well as still-living influential people who are pushing the boundaries, and also successful former university students. You can also invite guest speakers to give lecture to students.

