

# Solution Tree | Press

## **The Quest for Learning: How to Maximize Student Engagement**

*By Marie Alcock, Michael Fisher, and Allison Zmuda*

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### **Study Guide**

This study guide is a companion to the book *The Quest for Learning: How to Maximize Student Engagement* by Marie Alcock, Michael Fisher, and Allison Zmuda. *The Quest for Learning* introduces questing as a customizable pedagogy that can better meet 21st century students' learning needs than traditional pedagogies.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Making the Case for Questing**

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1. Why do students in grades 5 and up not feel engaged in school? What can teachers do to increase their engagement?
2. Why does the traditional sit-and-get pedagogy no longer suitably prepare students for the job market they will enter? What skills do employers need students to have, and how do you currently help students develop these skills?
3. What happens neurologically when the brain experiences a *toward state* or an *away state*? What kind of learning does the toward state foster?
4. How do Generation Z and Generation Alpha's perceptions of effectively engaging classrooms differ from previous generations' perceptions of classroom engagement?
5. Define what occurs in affinity spaces and what two levels these spaces have. What is an example of an affinity space, and why do these spaces play a crucial part in questing?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Identifying Questing Components**

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1. Name the three tenets of engagement. Why do these tenets act as the bedrock of a quest?
2. What does science prove happens to a learner when he or she engages with relevant inquiries and interesting experiences in a deeper learning experience?
3. Briefly describe how the extended cycle of expertise works and why it is effective in strengthening students' learning. What abilities does a student gain from learning how to learn through the extended cycle of expertise?
4. How do learners benefit from sharing and shaping their learning?
5. Briefly describe the three design models for contemporary questing experiences and how they connect to the tenets of engagement.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Inquiring With Question Design**

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1. What are essential questions, and what do teachers leverage to develop these questions?
2. In what way do driving questions often form? Illustrate how a student might develop a few driving inquiries.
3. Why can probing questions take learners to unforeseen places or make them feel anxious, impatient, or annoyed? Provide an example of a probing question you've used in your classroom, and describe how students reacted to it.
4. How do reflection questions impact students' learning?
5. What key points of instructional guidance can help form a culture that produces questions that require higher-order thinking skills?

## **Chapter 4**

### **Playing With Game Design**

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1. On what three concepts is gaming literacy based? In your own words, describe what gaming literacy entails and how questing helps increase this literacy.
2. Why do all win states, big and small, matter? How do teachers win, and what might examples of win states be for students? Describe a win state you or one of your students has recently experienced in your classroom.
3. What do cooperative games require players to do, and what contemporary skills are nourished during cooperative game play? Why do many game players prefer these types of games to other games?
4. List the questions teachers should consider when they work to extend quests using game design.
5. What considerations should teachers make when they determine what games they should use with their students? What will the best fit depend on?

## **Chapter 5**

### **Building Connections With Network Design**

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1. What can students engage in, access, and communicate when they take part in network design?
2. Write your own *we can* statement that represents a standards-based or dispositional member goal for your classroom.
3. Briefly describe the types of network spaces available—physical, plus, public, member, and mentor spaces—and provide an example of each.
4. How can teachers help keep students safe online? What should teachers do to honor their safety without limiting their learning?
5. What ethics issues should teachers educate students on when they begin to collaborate with global partners, and what should teachers do to make sure students know how to use online content ethically?
6. What should students consider as they verify the truth and what to believe?

## **Chapter 6**

### **Launching the Quest**

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1. What questions should teachers ask in regard to their curriculum, assessment, and instructional designs to make sure they teach students how to lead and solve problems? What do your own answers to these questions tell you about how well your curriculum addresses students' development as leaders and problem solvers?
2. What kinds of questions should teachers ask and which ones should they avoid when they take on the questing for learning framework, and why is this the case? How does the questing framework benefit students?
3. In what ways can textbooks benefit students as they embark on a quest?
4. Take a look at your school's mission statement or its other commitments to learning and learners. What ideas does it inspire for designing driving questions and starting quests?
5. When teachers frame a challenge for students, what criteria should they use to appraise the challenge?

6. Why do the backward design approach and learning goal maps prove helpful in the questing experience?

## **Chapter 7**

### **Introducing Students to Quests**

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1. What purpose does each of the four experience phases of gamification serve in introducing students to quests?
2. Provide an example of a hook you have used to catch students' interest in a topic you teach and how that has piqued their interest. Or consider a case in which you could incorporate a hook into a lesson that students have shown a lack of interest in.
3. In your own words, describe *onboarding*. What are teachers and students accountable for during this process?
4. Why do teachers need to translate learning targets for their students? Break down one of your curriculum standards into learning targets that your students will understand.
5. What kinds of inquiry, game, and network design choices must students and teachers address together when they talk design during the onboarding stage of a quest?

## **Chapter 8**

### **Providing Instructional Support**

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1. What is scaffolding, and why do students need to clearly understand the purpose of scaffolding?
2. Consider the sample probing questions provided on page 99. Draft a few of your own probing questions.
3. How can a commitment statement impact students' quests, and why may students push back against such a commitment? Craft your own individual commitment statement.
4. For what reasons should teachers use checkpoints during quests?
5. What two levels of feedback do formative assessments give to learners?
6. Briefly describe the four iterative steps that make up the intertwined feedback spiral.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Demonstrating Learning**

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1. Why do deliverables carry importance in reaching the successful conclusion of a quest, and what do they reveal?
2. What dual purpose do teachers commit to when they guide quests? Also, why is the journey of a quest as important as its results?
3. List the three parameters a deliverable must meet. What roles do students and teachers play throughout the deliverable experience, and what reflective prompts should they consider throughout the experience?
4. In your own words, describe *unexpected outcomes*. Why does a quest lead to these outcomes?
5. Why should learners reflect on their quest when they reach the end of it, and in what ways can students document and reflect on their quests? Which of these documentation and reflection methods would you most likely use with your students, and why is this the case?