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The Common Core State Standards describe the essential knowledge and skills that students should master. But where are the standards for the qualities that are at the heart of all learning? We believe that to meet learning goals while creating independent lifelong learners, classrooms and schools should adhere to the following 10 standards for engagement and motivation.

1. Active learning permeates instruction.

Students interact with instructional materials in ways that promote critical thinking, inquiry, and problem solving.

2. Lessons and projects incorporate student autonomy.

Students develop a sense of control over their own learning when they are given choices about texts, partners for projects, performance assessments, writing topics, and so on.

3. Relevance creates authentic purposes for learning.

When students ask “Why do I need to learn this?” teachers have an answer that builds students’ connection to the material and their investment in learning about it.

4. Students have frequent opportunities for collaboration.

Teachers use such strategies as inquiry groups, literature circles, seminars, partner reading, peer revision, and more.

5. Technology is used appropriately to increase learning opportunities and depth of study.

Students have access to a wide variety of devices, which are used to increase engagement and to prepare students for their futures in higher education and the workplace.

6. Multiple learning methods create opportunities for intellectual growth.

Students learn through a wide range of instructional activities, such as discussions, webquests, small-group collaboration, individual reflection, writing to learn, and interdisciplinary projects.

7. The right balance of challenge and success creates a climate for independence.

Tasks are challenging enough to interest each learner but not so challenging that frustration preempts learning.

8. Differentiation and scaffolding ensure that every student has opportunities to learn well.

Differentiation of texts, content, assignments, and feedback keeps students engaged while they receive targeted, individualized support in moving toward independence.

9. Feedback and authentic assessment create deep, sustained learning.

Students receive timely, ongoing feedback during learning, and they are asked to demonstrate their learning in authentic, relevant ways.

10. Inquiry promotes a sense of curiosity and a desire to learn.

Learning is sometimes inquiry-based or problem-based, giving students opportunities to research, evaluate, analyze, adapt, and create.

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