



Motivation and Engagement Survey Closes with a High Number of Students Participating.

The response from Swinburne University's first year students to the Motivation and Engagement Survey held over May was outstanding. More than 1000 students completed the Survey and will soon be receiving their personal learning profiles as well as going into the draw to win one of the amazing prizes on offer. Three lucky students will win an iPad 2, and there are also ten \$100 Swinburne Bookshop vouchers and 50 movie passes to give away. The Major Prizes will be awarded to our winners during the first week of Semester 2 by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic, Professor Shirley Leitch, details of which will be announced at a later date.

The information gathered in the Survey will assist Swinburne's Professional Learning unit to gain a fuller understanding of the learning approaches that our first year students bring to their studies. Information about the learning approaches taken by different cohorts of students will contribute to identifying teaching and learning methods that support these students' learning strengths and also support growth in other learning domains recognised as opportunities for improved outcomes.

The Motivation and Engagement Survey is the first major activity of Swinburne University's Academic Personal Best Project. In sporting domains, an emphasis on personal best helps athletes focus their efforts towards competing with personal standards in order to drive improved performance. Professor Andrew Martin, an educational psychologist and future fellow at the University of Sydney, has applied the sporting 'Personal Best' approach to academic performance so that students might shift their learning strategies and develop learning goals that are grounded by self reference and thus facilitate improved learning outcomes. The aim is for students to compete with personal standards more so than against one another. This change places greater emphasis on students' mastery goals rather than performance goals, particularly where performance goals begin to serve avoidance strategies (ie, aim to avoid negative outcomes).

Evidence for mastery goals suggests that when students adopt academic goals that are specific to a task, challenging, competitively linked to their previous standards, and have evolved with self improvement in mind, there is a greater likelihood that students' motivation and engagement with learning will grow. These approaches to goal setting combine to form a student's Personal Best orientation that contributes to their self efficacy as learners, intrinsic motivation, sense of developing competency, and captivation in learning activities (flow).

In the second week of Semester 2 the Academic Personal Best Project will begin a pilot program of facilitated group/peer gatherings aimed at improving the generic learning skills of vulnerable students. The program will also employ the help of mentors selected from interested post graduate psychology students. Recruitment for mentors is about to begin and selected mentors will begin their training in July to prepare for the start of the Academic Personal Best Program in August. The Academic Personal Best Program will run each week during Semester 2, finishing in the last week of the semester to allow students time to prepare, and no doubt apply their new skills over the preceding exam period. The APB team are looking forward to keeping you up to date about the program and other developments as they unfold.

Sean Tinker

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