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Dr Amalia Di Iorio, Associate Professor
International Finance

What does ‘student engagement’ mean to you?
‘Student engagement’ means the active involvement of my students in their learning. Without involving students in their learning, it is difficult for them to relate to the concepts and principles that they encounter in the classroom. In order to engage students, the classroom experience must be relevant to the students’ own experiences and stimulate their curiosity so that they want to take their learning one step further - ‘I want to find out more about this’. Students must be intrinsically motivated to gain knowledge not just for the sake of completing assessment tasks but more importantly to apply that knowledge in their everyday lives - both personal and professional.

What steps do you take in the planning of your courses that address how to better engage students?
In order to motivate my students to learn, I ensure that my course materials are current and relevant. I am an active researcher in my discipline area. I contribute to international research journals and I attend conferences to stay in touch with the latest developments in my field.

What strategies do you use in your teaching to engage learners?
I believe that a key factor in engaging students is the lecturer’s approach to teaching. For this reason I teach with enthusiasm and passion. As teachers, we lead by example. I engage my students by:
• Conducting interactive classes where my students are asked to provide real-life applications of the theoretical principles studied in previous classes.
• Facilitating classroom discussions, which analyse research articles that address practitioners’ views of theoretical concepts.
• Conducting ‘Question and Answer’ sessions in which students are able to ask me to clarify or review any aspect of the course undertaken to that point in time.
• Initiating ‘Reflective Moments’ when I ask students to reflect on what they have learnt so far.
• Keeping it simple - I use simple language and uncomplicated frameworks to explain concepts that are complex.
• Making myself accessible - I encourage my students to email or contact me at any time. I share some of my own personal experiences with them so that they feel that they know me as a person not just as their lecturer, and I attempt to make them laugh . . .