FOUNDATION for LEARNING:
Tasks for the first days and weeks of school
to increase student motivation and learning

⇒ Set up and maintain physical space
What messages do you want to convey to students as they enter your room?
What information would be helpful to have posted on the wall? (e.g., bell schedule, homework schedule, …)
Involve students in setting up and maintaining the space.

⇒ Build community Establish relationships with your students and among students.
What are we going to be about…as a group of learners…and what will we do to accomplish that?
What kind of thinkers are we going to be and what will that look like?
Guide classes to craft vision statements for themselves as a group: “This year, we will build in each other and encourage these thinking behaviors: _____, _____, ______ (Ex. Persistence, getting unstuck, and considering various possibilities to tackle a problem.)” Post it and refer back to it when students display or support that thinking.

⇒ Establish routines and procedures
What will your procedures be for starting and ending class? Students working in pairs or fours? Students sharing their thinking/solutions with the whole class?
What you do consistently in the first 2 weeks can easily become routines.

⇒ Pre-assess prior knowledge and skills
What do you need to know about students to begin to plan student-centered and appropriate instruction?

⇒ Engage all students in real learning
How will you engage students in the first days in real NEW learning so that they believe they CAN learn and WILL learn in your classroom?

⇒ Build in time to reflect—for you and students
Ask your students—in the first week or two of school—to reflect on their learning—what helps, what’s hard, what do they need, what have they already learned.
How will you ensure that YOU take time to reflect on your learning?

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