



Breakthrough Strategies: Classroom-Based Practices to Support New Majority College Students

By Kathleen A. Ross

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Breakthrough Strategies identifies effective strategies that faculty have used to help New Majority students—those from minority, immigrant, or disadvantaged backgrounds—build the necessary skills to succeed in college. As the proportion of New Majority students rises, there is increased attention to helping them gain access to college. Once enrolled, however, these students often face significant challenges of adjustment, with few resources for support. Specifically, there is little attention to students' experiences within their college classrooms and their relationships with professors. At the same time, faculty who work with these students have little guidance on how to help them adjust to new expectations and identities as they engage with college-level work.

Sister Kathleen A. Ross, a MacArthur fellow and president emerita of Heritage University, has devoted three decades to helping New Majority students get college degrees. Based on an action-research project undertaken at Heritage University and Yakima Valley Community College in Washington State, the book highlights eleven strategies to encourage student success, including: asking questions in class; navigating the syllabus; and developing an academic identity. Written in a warm, down-to-earth voice, *Breakthrough Strategies* is infused with the belief that faculty can become a powerful resource for students, and that classroom instruction can be an important vehicle for supporting these students' development and success.

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Review

"Beyond benefiting faculty and institutions, this book also motivates new research questions....Ross's work is a substantial first step in moving strategies for engaging students directly into classrooms." —**Jane Lincove & Ann Kellogg, *Teachers College Record***

"This book will sensitize faculty to the needs of this growing part of the student body. However, much of the information is applicable to students from all backgrounds, and will improve college teaching for all involved." —**William McDonald, *Reflective Teaching***

From the Back Cover

Sister Kathleen A. Ross has devoted three decades to helping New Majority students—those from minority, immigrant, or disadvantaged backgrounds—get college degrees. In this book she describes eleven effective strategies to encourage students to build the necessary skills to succeed in college. Written in a warm, down-to-earth voice, *Breakthrough Strategies* is infused with the belief that faculty can become a powerful resource for students, and that classroom instruction can be an important vehicle for supporting these students' development and success.

"Kathleen Ross offers practical advice on how to create truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive experiences for all students. This book is a valuable primer for busy faculty and staff who care deeply about their students. There are lessons here for all of us."

—**Judith A. Ramaley**, president emerita and distinguished professor of public service, Portland State University

"Sister Kathleen Ross provides a clear and relatable guide for teaching New Majority students whose backgrounds and perspectives are often different from those shared by classroom leaders and institutional decision makers. Informed by firsthand experience and research, the strategies provided in this book will enable others to become more empathetic and culturally competent educators who can unlock the unique strengths of today's students."

—**Scott Dalessandro**, associate program officer, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

"Through her pioneering experience at Heritage College, Sister Kathleen teaches us how to harness the core power of diversity through the inclusion and engagement of students from the New Majority. I recommend this book to anyone interested in leveraging the power of diversity to redefine college campuses around the world."

—**Scott L. Thomas**, dean and professor, College of Education and Social Services, University of Vermont

Kathleen A. Ross is president emerita and professor of cross-cultural communication at Heritage University, a four-year institution that she founded in 1982 and led for twenty-eight years. **Michelle Asha Cooper** is president of the Institute for Higher Education Policy.

About the Author

Kathleen A. Ross is president emerita and professor of cross-cultural communication at Heritage University, a four-year institution that she founded in 1982 and led for twenty-eight years.

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