

Strategies for Engaging Students

Dr. Michael Dorer

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What is student engagement?

Student engagement is something that teachers strive for in their classrooms, but it isn't always easy to define. Generally, student engagement is demonstrated when students are **interested** in the task at hand even when the work is **challenging**. They **persevere** despite the obstacles and **take pride** in the completed work...

From *Mary Firestone* at *Study.com*

Another Definition

It is convenient to understand engagement with an activity as being formed by good behavior (**behavioral engagement**), positive feelings (**emotional engagement**), and, above all, deep thinking (**cognitive engagement**).

From Nicolás Pino James in Edutopia

Benefits of Engagement

Student engagement is vital for success in school.

According to multiple research studies, engaged students . . .

- Experience improved academic achievement and satisfaction
- Are more receptive to lessons
- Are more likely to have the capacity to work through learning challenges
- Earn higher standardized test scores
- Have better social skills
- Reduce class disruptions

What about *Disengagement*?

In contrast, ***disengagement*** from classroom learning is associated with threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and/or relatedness to valued others.

- Lowers cognitive performance
- Increases misbehavior and disruptive behaviors
- Causes academic avoidance behaviors
- Worsens learning, behavior, and emotional problems
- Increases boredom
- For older children it increases absenteeism and dropout rates.

Strategies to Increase Engagement Structure

- Learn About Your Students: Observe
- Personalized (as opposed to individualized) instruction
- Have an open lesson policy
- Create a *Culture of Collaboration*
- Genius hour
- Use 20% time
- Home involvement and engagement in schooling

Strategies to Increase Engagement Activity

- * Active-learning environment that incorporates movement
- * Quick games
- * Minimize *Circle Time*
- * Lessons should be brisk and energetic
- * Pick up the pace.
- * Avoid dull or rote projects: worksheets, word finds, time fillers, busy work, pointless homework, etc.

Emotional Engagement

- Create an Emotionally Safe Classroom
- Show children that you like them
- Using unusual information to capture “situational interest” keeps students guessing
- The Self-System
- Pick up the pace.
- Use end of the day summaries

Engaging the Imagination

- Story telling
 - Where are you in this story?
 - Where is this story in you?
 - Use origin stories and etymologies
- Use the arts
- Dramatic touch: Using creative drama
- Bring in predicting, estimation, inference

More Strategies to Increase Engagement

- Avoid correcting Sensorial mistakes
- Use vocal dynamics
- Mix up your teaching styles
- Hand and finger signals
- Using unusual information to capture situational interest keeps students guessing
- Pick up the pace.
- Cultivate your *Engagement Meter*

Emphasize Thinking

- *Differentiated follow up work*: always offer (exactly) two choices
- HOT discussions
 - Use questioning strategies that make all students think and answer
 - Never repeat back the answers that the children give
 - Ask open ended questions
 - Keep yourself out of the discussion
- Avoid the “*Let’s think about that*” syndrome for inaccurate answers
- Use prediction, inference, and estimation
- Avoid a culture of develop of guessing

Cognitive Engagement

- * Use KWL (Know, Wonder, Learn)
- * A clearly stated purpose: At the start of a lesson share the direct aims and goals
- * At the end of a lesson have students summarize
- * Frequently question during lessons
- * Find a way for everyone in an age group to work on or with this material or idea
- * Create a culture of exploration instead of a culture of the right answer

Keep Exploring



- If you are a teacher, start implementing these strategies. Now evaluate and share with colleagues.
- If you are an instructional leader, urge teachers to begin implementing these strategies. Evaluate as a group.
- Remember, high engagement will help all students.

Thank you!!