

Engaged Learning Strategies

Research notes the importance of meaningful, engaged learning in classrooms. Student engagement requires capturing the attention and maintaining active participation of students. Keeping students actively involved in learning is a challenging task. The following strategies are sound instructional practices that help ensure the engagement of students in positive ways.

- Select materials and tasks that are at the appropriate level of difficulty and relate to student interests (1)
- Present new concepts using a logical instructional sequence that maximizes the likelihood that a skill will be learned (e.g., model, guided practice, independent practice) (2)
- Provide opportunities for students to define their own learning goals and evaluate their achievement (3)
- Integrate real-life experiences into instruction through problem-based learning (4)
- Use storytelling, theatrics, and props to focus and capture the attention of students as a new concept is introduced (5)
- Activate prior student knowledge by promoting a discussion that enables a student to make connections to learned information/experiences prior to the introduction of a lesson (6)
- Use voice intonation to sustain student attention throughout a lesson (e.g., whisper, pause, tone variation) (7)
- Employ auditory signals to attract and maintain focus of students (e.g., play chimes, ring a bell, use a clap pattern, play music) (8)
- Use visual signals to attract and maintain focus of students (e.g., illustrations, raised hand, overhead timer) (9)
- Use a laser pointer, stick pointer, highlighter tape, or colored pens to focus on key information in the text (10)
- Frame projected information (e.g., use of hands, a drawn box, highlighter, pointer) when using an overhead or LCD projector (11)
- Face students and maintain eye-to-eye contact during direct instruction (12)
- Move around the room during instruction and independent work to maintain visibility (13)
- Avoid instructional lag time by having materials prepared in advance (14)
- Allow students to readjust seating if they are not positioned where they can see the board or media screen (15)
- Present instruction at a lively pace using humor (16)

- Use an egg timer, overhead timer, and/or hourglass timer as a guide to complete tasks (17)
- Increase modeling, guided practice, and hands-on learning to increase student participation (18)
- Arrange collaborative experiences to encourage students to explore, discover, and investigate (19)
- Have students record notes or make illustrations of key points during instruction (20)
- Decrease teacher talk and increase student response time with information being taught (21)
- Promote high-response opportunities during direct instruction (e.g., partner to partner, small group, individual) (22)
- Break assignments into smaller chunks to give students opportunities to respond frequently (23)
- Include illustrations, diagrams, demonstrations, charts, and manipulatives to present instruction (24)
- Pause during a lesson to allow students to repeat a word or phrase about what is being taught (25)
- Arouse student curiosity by bringing in something that relates to the topic being studied (26)
- Use higher-level questioning techniques to stimulate thinking at varying levels of complexity (27)
- Utilize computer-assisted instruction to build background knowledge and provide frequent feedback with self-correction (28)
- Use organizers to focus students' attention and increase comprehension of concepts to be learned (29)
- Incorporate names of students when telling stories or presenting problems to capture student attention (30)
- Select high-interest material to introduce and teach a new concept (31)
- Make use of color in gaining attention of students (e.g., colored dry-erase pens on dry-erase boards, colored highlighting tape, colored Post-it notes) (32)
- Illustrate key points, no matter what level of artistic ability, to focus attention and help in retention of information (33)
- Turn off room lighting and use a flashlight to highlight or to draw the attention of students to key words/items (34)
- Have earphones/earplugs available for students who have auditory distractibility (35)
- Keep desktop and/or table top free of clutter to help students focus on instruction (36)
- Seat reluctant students close to students who remain focused throughout instruction (37)

- Stop often to summarize key elements in a lesson to point out to students what is important to remember (38)**
- Invite students to use their own words to summarize key points in a lesson to a partner (39)**
- Provide access to a less distracting location for independent work (40)**
- Allow students opportunities to move about the room during instruction when appropriate (41)**
- Alternate between passive and active instructional activities (42)**
- Pause during instruction to ask questions and check students' levels of understanding or any misunderstandings of content (43)**
- Use Think-Pair-Share to give each student an opportunity to think prior to forming a response and to allow each student an opportunity to share ideas (44)**