

Teacher Toolkit Document

This document was created to provide ideas to educators on how to increase engagement for all students in a classroom when teaching them new concepts or skills, particularly conflict management skills and concepts. The document was created for the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management's School Conflict Management Grant Training Program by Dr. Tony Menendez at Cleveland State University, Cleveland, Ohio.

Increasing Engaged Time

Importance of Engaged Time

- The link between time and learning is one of the most consistent findings in educational research
- The productive use of time increases the likelihood that greater student learning will take place

Definitions

- Allocated time---amount of time for a topic
- Instructional time—amount of time of active teaching
- Engaged time (time on task)—portion of instructional time that students spend directly involved in learning activities
- Engaged Time (three components)
 1. Student is attending to material and task
 2. Student is making appropriate motor responses
 3. Student is asking for assistance in an acceptable manner
- Academic Learning Time—amount of time students are successful while engaged (combines engagement and success)
- When students are successful they feel better about themselves and the material learned

Increasing Engaged Time

- Give explicit and direct instructions
- Monitor progress
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Provide corrective feedback
- Reward students for completing tasks

Transitions

- Transitions constitute a major source of off-task activities
- Transitions commonly involve changing classes or activities
- Transition activities commonly include sharpening pencils, talking, getting drinks (teachers should plan these activities to occur at pre-specified times)

Expectations Count

Expectations should establish that students:

1. Adhere to a schedule
2. Announce changes in advance
3. Have materials ready prior to transitions
4. Establish routines

Dangers of Non-engaged Time

- A low degree of engaged time creates a vacuum in which students can and will exhibit problem behaviors
- Well-run classrooms with high rates of successful engaged time are places in which there are few behavioral problems

Correlates of Engaged Time

- Higher achieving students are engaged for 75% of the time
- Lower achieving students often have engagement rates that are below 50%
- If we want to assure achievement, then we must engage students in meaningful tasks

Non-engaged Students

Frequently:

Become passive learners

Give up easily on tasks

Become anxious

Become withdrawn

Become angry about school

Fail in future grades

Systemic Problem

Many students are used to watching television and expect to be entertained.

Subsequently...

The role of a teacher involves being interesting and involving students in the learning process.

Planning is the Key

- Students who are engaged are benefiting from a carefully planned environment
- Teachers also benefit from an environment exemplified by students who are academically engaged
- Create a “Win-Win” situation within your classroom

TOOLKIT for Engaging Students

1. Response Cards

Teachers prepare a set of response cards for each student prior to the lesson. Following instruction, a teacher asks a variety of questions requiring a student response. Format for response cards may be:

- Yes / No Response Cards
- True / False Response Cards
- Other vehicles: Thumbs Up / Down; Stand up if you agree

2. Lecture Bingo

Teacher selects key terms from lecture and creates a BINGO game:

- Begin with a blank BINGO card and put a term in each square until card is filled
- During the lecture, have students monitor their card and communicate “Bingo” with class

3. Red Rubber Ball

Allows teacher to use a ball to select the question that a single student or team has to answer.

- Write letters or numbers on the ball with permanent marker to indicate questions recorded on 3 x 5 cards and numbered or lettered correspondingly
- Toss ball to student and have student (or team members) answer question related to where left thumb is when ball is caught

4. Pick Your Post

Teacher prepares 4 or 5 stations around the classroom, each with a sheet of paper to delineate an activity that allows students to demonstrate their learning. Following instructions, students can be divided into groups to move through the various stations.

Examples:

Prepare a skit
List and define key terms
Write a poem
List key concepts

Base activities on age and ability.

5. Carousel Brainstorming

Allows students to brainstorm solutions to problem.

- Teacher breaks students into five groups; each group works with one sheet and proceeds in clockwise direction to the next sheet with music as the prompt to move from sheet to sheet
- Teacher uses prompt until all students have “worked” all sheets

6. Think Pair Share

Allows teacher to ask a question and have student respond individually and work with class peer.

Steps:

1. Question is presented
2. Student works alone
3. Student shares with peer
4. Class discussion may follow

Colored chips or numbers may be used to “pair” students

Variation (for skill building activities): Group 3 students together, instead of pairs. Each student takes a turn being the “observer” while the other 2 share. Observer can give feedback on how well the skills were demonstrated. Rotate roles so that all students can practice skills.

7. Dominoes

Allows teacher the opportunity to organize the activities of teams of students. Teacher prepares question and answer cards for lesson content—question on one card, answer on another. After instruction, teacher passes out the cards to students and students “search” for the peer who has the answer to the question with which they have been presented.

8. Word Find

Teachers access Internet sites to develop word find puzzles that relate to key terminology.

9. K W L

Activates students’ background knowledge and uncovers learning interests. Have students respond within a columnar format, recording on newsprint or the board.

K Knowledge (student background)—What does the student already know about the topic?

W What may be interesting to student to learn

L Learned content (following lesson)—What has the student learned?

10. Conversation Buddies

Purpose: To prepare for later activities that requires partners for conversation.

Goal: Everybody will have a different partner for each conversation.

Method:

Leave your table, taking Conversation Buddy Sheet and pen or pencil.

1. Find a “Buddy” for the first blank and each sign the other’s paper. Return the paper to its original owner
2. Find a different person and each sign the next blank on the other’s sheet.
3. Repeat until all blanks are signed by different people.

Note: if you can’t find someone for a particular number:

✚ Wail loudly until you are noticed;

✚ Stand on a chair and shout;

- ✚ Stand and watch and wait for chaos to subside;
- ✚ Sit down. It will all work out!

11. Concentric Circles

Allows teacher to engage entire class in a series of discussion questions. have students count off by 2's. Ask 1's to form a circle, and ask 2's to form a circle around them. Have 1's turn outward to face the 2's and identify a partner directly opposite. (If there is someone without a partner, pair the extra student with another and ask them to stay together throughout the activity, both facing 1 person in the other circle.) Some teachers like to name the circles, just for fun.

Ask the first question and have each facing pair discuss. You can give a time limit if you like or just call time when the conversation seems to be slowing down. Ask one of the circles to move X number of spaces to the right or left. Each time you ask students to move, have them say goodbye to their partner, and greet their new partner. Continue asking questions and moving either circle in either direction until you have completed all questions.

You may stop after each question to ask some process questions, or you may wait until all questions have been discussed and process the entire discussion. Activity is appropriate for discussing subject matter content, conflict concepts, feelings, or anything your creative mind can conjure up!

12. Brainstorming

A technique for generating ideas or thoughts about a given question, problem or need.

Benefits:

1. Generates the most amounts of ideas from the most persons in the least amount of time.
2. Stimulates spontaneous and creative thinking
3. Promotes member cooperation and participation
4. Creates a wealth of unique, as well as traditional, ideas with which to work

To Brainstorm:

1. Gather materials to record ideas. (newsprint and marker are ideal!)
2. Explain the concept and give the rules:
 - a. **All** ideas are recorded, no matter how wild or off the wall.
 - b. **No critiquing, evaluating, questioning, or discussion of ideas during brainstorming (THIS IS CRITICAL!)**
 - c. Encourage members to build on other ideas.
3. **LET THE IDEAS FLOW!** (Keep the process moving rapidly to keep the energy level high.)
4. After brainstorming, allow opportunity for clarification or explanation of any idea for which there is a question. The person who gave the idea should clarify.
5. Choose an idea.
6. **GO FOR IT!**

Reference:

Johns, B. H., Crowley, E.P., & Guetzole, E. (2002). *Effective instruction for students with emotional and behavioral disorders*. Denver: Love.