

WAYS TO KEEP KIDS ENGAGED IN CLASS

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Annotation: *This article reveals information about ways of keeping pupils engaged in the classroom. There are several ways, activities and games which can help teacher during the lesson when the pupils are bored. Sometimes it's an individual on the team who can't seem to get involved; other times it's the entire group. Over the years, I've come up with a range of strategies to eliminate dead time and move students up the active-learning ladder.*

Аннотация: *в данной статье рассматриваются пути занятия учеников в классе. Для привлечения учеников и занять их во время уроков проводится много упражнений, занятий и игр. Иногда это-человек в команде, который не может вмешиваться в других случаях это вся группа. За прошедшие годы было разработано ряд стратегий, направленных на то чтобы устранить пассивное время, и поднять учеников на уровень активного обучения.*

Ключевые слова: *деятельность, занятость, учитель, задание, сложное задание, типы занятий.*

When students let their minds drift off, they're losing valuable learning time. Here are ten smart ways to increase classroom participation.

As we know all too well, kids aren't a whole lot different than adults: If they aren't absorbed by what's going on, they'll find something else that interests them.

Getting all your students focused, eager, and on task at the beginning of class is challenging enough. Equally problematic, once you have them locked in to the lesson, is watching them zone out. There's nothing unusual about that. After all, anyone who has to sit through a long routine - including a teacher's presentation - is bound to drift off at some point.

Still, unless you manage to capture and keep students' focus, whether at the beginning of or midway through class, the engine of student learning that you are trying to drive simply isn't even in gear.

I call this lack of engagement dead time. Dead time interferes with students' learning, and it is contagious. It lures those who are on task into wondering, "Why should I pay attention if others aren't?"

I have come to feel that dead time is so pernicious that I will do everything I can to prevent even the hint of an outbreak. If you strive for maximum learning for all your students, then allowing kids to be stuck in dead time feels like a small betrayal - to yourself and to them.

Active learning and active listening - in which students are thoroughly and thoughtfully engaged with each other or the teacher - represents the opposite of dead time.

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Developing these activities initially takes time, but the payoff - in terms of classroom management and overall learning - is more than worth the effort. By building a storehouse of activities to draw on, I'm rarely at a loss to implement one of them to get kids back on track.

Not surprisingly, too, students get to know these strategies and look forward to them. I find they work at the beginning of class to calm kids down or any time they need an energizing way to refocus.

Here are some stages in engaging pupils in the classroom.

1. Start Class with a Mind Warm-Up

A classic warm-up is to ask students to find the mistakes planted in material written on the board. (You can use this idea in any subject area.) But instead of asking them to work silently and alone, and then debrief in a classic question-and-answer session with one student at a time (while many sit inattentively), use a mix of collaboration and competition to eliminate what could potentially become dead time.

Here's how: Organize teams of three students and ask them to work together (quietly) and raise their hands when they think they have found all the mistakes. After the first team signals it's done, give a bit more time and then have teams indicate with their fingers -- together on the count of three -- the number of mistakes they found in the work. The team that found the most describes its answers until another team disagrees politely or until they are finished.

2. Use Movement to Get Kids Focused

Ask all students to stand behind their desks and join in simple choreographed physical movement. Because most kids find it invigorating and it's easy to monitor full participation, it may become one of your favorite ways to get kids focused and kill dead time.

Here's how, for the primary grades: Teach hand-clapping patterns to accompany a chanted verse or a set of math facts. Add foot stomping or hand clapping with a partner to create variety.

Here's how, for the middle grades: Create a rhythm with finger snapping and hand clapping, which you model and they echo back. Vary the rhythm and

pattern in intervals of 15-20 seconds to challenge them to pay attention and join in.

3. Teach Students How to Collaborate Before Expecting Success

Doing project learning and other team-based work without prior training can lead to lots of dead time. You can nip much of it in the bud by teaching collaboration skills before projects get started. You don't need to use an activity related to your subject area to teach teamwork.

Debrief afterward, and train the observers to give a positive comment before a critical one: "I liked that they, and I wonder if they could have also." Switch the observers with the tower builders and see if they can do better, then debrief again.

Occasionally, have them write a few sentences next to their entry explaining why they want you to read that particular one. Let them know that you will read the passages marked in green and that, time permitting, you might read the rest if you have time.

The more you can manage your classroom to be a supportive environment, where students are encouraged to take risks without fear of being put down or teased, the easier it will be to use your fairness cup regularly, without feeling that you are setting students up for failure.

Here's how: Write each student's name on a Popsicle stick and put the sticks in a cup. To keep students on their toes, pull a random stick to choose someone to speak or answer a question. Important: When you begin using your fairness cup, prepare a range of questions, some of which all your students can successfully answer. This strategy allows the bottom third of your class to get involved and answer questions without being put on the spot.

By insisting that students "ask three before me," you make it clear that they are expected to seek assistance from all members of their team before they turn to you.

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