

Inside. Outside. Changes.

Engagement Inventory and Interventions

Engagement is more than participation. It is not about compliance or good behavior. Engaged learners prepare, focus, contribute, and invest in their learning. Expectations for what it means to engage depend on the goal of the class session, as well as each individual student's strengths and weaknesses.

When to use this resource:

- If you see consistently low trends of engagement: a student's engagement is persistently low for longer than 1-2 weeks and your current/previous efforts are not resulting in changes.
- If you notice a sudden drop in engagement after a history of moderate or high engagement
- If one or a very small group of students appears to be an outlier with consistent low engagement, not reflective of the entire class
- If you learn that a student's low engagement is not repeated in other classes or subjects

How to use this resource:

- Begin with the "inside" - reflect on the student's behavior and interactions inside your classroom.
- Then consider the "outside" - look beyond your classroom to understand more about your student's behavior and interactions in the rest of the school.
- Based on what you learn, review possible interventions and make a plan for moving forward. Consider a one-on-one conversation with the student as your first step.

Inside. Outside. Make Changes.

Engagement Inventory and Interventions

Inside.

Reflect on the student's behavior and interactions *inside* your classroom.

Head

- ☐ they appear bored or uninterested in specific activities, content, or curriculum
- ☐ they appear overwhelmed, like they are having difficulty understanding and making progress
- ☐ they lack confidence or have expressed fear of failure
- ☐ they have documented or suspected learning challenges or differences

Heart

- ☐ we have a history of negative, tense, or otherwise problematic student-teacher interactions
- ☐ they have a history of negative, tense, or otherwise problematic interactions with classmates during class
- ☐ they do not appear to have friendships or strong social bonds in the class

Body

- ☐ they frequently appear tired/low energy (reluctant to engage in physical activities, slumped in their desk, etc.)
- ☐ they complain of being hungry/thirsty
- ☐ they fidget or move constantly

Has anything ***changed*** in your classroom recently? (Content, instruction, roster changes, etc.)

Outside.

Look outside the classroom to understand more about your student's behavior and interactions beyond your classroom. Reach out to colleagues as necessary and appropriate, keeping the *dignity of the student* at the forefront.

Consult one or more colleagues that also teach the student:

- ☐ Ask colleagues if that student is or is not engaged in their class (and ask for insights, reflection)
- ☐ Ask a colleague to observe your class and identify why the student(s) might be disengaged.

Contact the student's counselor or social worker:

- ☐ Ask the counselor or social worker if they know why a student might be disengaged.
- ☐ Ask the counselor or social worker if they can share any insights about the student's engagement outside of your class or experiences at home (that is not confidential information)

Reach out to the student's parents:

- ☐ Describe what you observe, without judgment. Ask if they know why the student might be disengaged in your class.
- ☐ Ask if there is any important information you should know about the student's life at home or at school.

What **changes** have you learned about in the student's life at home or school outside your classroom recently?

Make Changes.

Intervention	When and how should I use this?
1:1 Conversation	<p>A one on one conversation with a student is very often the best first step. Ideally, this conversation occurs in the following context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • you have a history of mostly positive interactions with the student • you, as the teacher, are in a calm and receptive state, ready to listen, not chastise • you are able to talk with the student in a manner that does not single them out or shame them <p>Resource: Edutopia: 4 Steps for Discussing Challenging Student Behavior</p>
Relationship Building	<p>Consider foundational relationship building if you have a history of negative or very impersonal interactions with the student. Establishing a pattern of positive interactions leads to fruitful 1:1 conversations.</p> <p>Consider bringing in a colleague or support staff member who already has strong ties with the student.</p> <p>Resource: 12 Strategies to Build Relationships</p>
Classroom Climate	<p>If you think a one on one conversation won't be effective or address any challenges, you might revisit your classroom climate as a whole. If a student's level of engagement is related to a general classroom challenge or social tensions, you have a few options for moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit classroom norms and expectations to reset the entire class, not just one student. Work with students to review classroom structures and routines, and consider developing an emotional charter. • Consider developing a class project or activity where students work together - with norms and boundaries for collaboration - on a project or topic they choose as a group.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential “quick” fixes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are physical needs being met? Does the class need snacks, water, a break for physical activity, or a change of scenery? ○ Would seating changes or re-arranging the classroom work stations lead to more positive social interactions? ● Ask for help: reach out to a counselor or social worker for strategies to improve the classroom climate. <p>Resource: 32 Strategies for Building a Positive Learning Environment</p>
Differentiation	<p>It might be time to rethink some areas of content or instruction, especially if you have learned key information in a one-on-one conversation with the student or from trusted adults. If you now have a better understanding of how a student prefers (or needs) to receive information or show mastery of skills, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How could you differentiate the content, process, product and/or learning environment in order to scaffold information or challenge with extensions to learning? ● How could you provide more opportunities for student choice, perhaps by planning learning experiences with student agency in mind? What opportunities exist for students to self-pace or make choices about how they demonstrate learning? When could you allow students to make choices about the content they learn or the order in which they learn? <p>Resources: Dare to Differentiate; A Diagram of Differentiation</p>
Curriculum Reboot for Relevance	<p>If you learn that a student’s low engagement is not repeated in other subject areas, or realize that the student’s low engagement only began with a change in curricular focus in your classroom, consider a reboot for relevance. Content and standards are often dictated, but finding ways to make that content relevant to students boosts engagement. Consider the following general strategies to increase relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● emphasize long term skill-building, rather than content retention ● demonstrate the value and utility of the skills students are developing ● make learning experiences that are student-directed (differentiating

	<p>process, product, or learning environment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• connect content to students' lived experiences and what they already know <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to Make a Seemingly Boring Topic Come Alive• Active Learning: Biology Professor Turns her Students into Chili Peppers• How To Make Learning Relevant To Your Students (And Why It's Crucial To Their Success)
--	---

Get more resources like this at www.opportunityeducation.org/resources